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Supported Employment Program Outcomes: The Participants' Perspectives

by

Kwok Wai David Liu ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

Department of Occupational Therapy

Edmonton, Alberta

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7th August, 2003

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Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Supported Employment Program Outcomes: The Participants' Perspectives* submitted by *Kwok Wai David Liu* in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Master of Science*.

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Abstract

A grounded theory approach was used in this qualitative study to generate a substantive theory explaining the outcomes of supported employment programs as experienced by people with schizophrenia. Seven study-informants recruited from a supported employment program were interviewed individually using semi-structured questions. Data were analyzed using the constant comparison method. Findings revealed that study-informants considered obtaining employment as a catalyzing measure of a process "making life better for self".

Program outcomes reported by study-informants were *having ability to perform effective job seeking*, *increased knowledge and skills on employment*, *forming a partnership*, *becoming reassured*, *achieving a better self-image*, and *obtaining employment*. The central theme *becoming more prepared* is a theoretical representation of all these program outcomes in relation to the above named process. Intervening conditions of program outcomes were identified. Relevance of vocational outcomes to participants is presented. Implications for supported employment practice, occupational therapy, program evaluations, and research are discussed.

Dedication

To my wife, Violet, for her love, patience, and support.

To my parents.

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Chapter I – Introduction

Schizophrenia is one of the most disabling mental illnesses. It is a prolonged illness and is characterized by (1) a spectrum of positive symptoms (e.g. disturbance in perception or thinking process), (2) a spectrum of negative symptoms (e.g. diminished affect and volition), and (3) marked deterioration of social/occupational functioning (American Psychiatry Association, 2000). These symptoms and the severity of disability fluctuate. People with schizophrenia tend to recover more slowly than other psychotic patients (Harrow, Sands, Silverstein, & Goldberg, 1997). It is estimated that, with various degrees of severity, schizophrenia affects 1 in 100 North American adults (Kaplan & Sadock, 1998). In Canada, people suffering from schizophrenia accounted for 15% of patients discharged from all mental health hospitals or psychiatric units of general hospitals in 1995-96 (Federal, Provincial and Territorial Advisory Committee on Population Health, 1999).

Although recent advancements in biotechnology and neurosciences allow scientists to relate biochemical abnormalities in the human brain to symptoms of schizophrenia, the exact causes of schizophrenia are unknown. Etiological explanations specific to schizophrenia remain hypothetical (Meltzer & Fatemi, 2000).

People with schizophrenia are confronted with more than an illness. Most of them also face various social issues such as stigma, unemployment, and poverty. Such social issues are not inherent to but are closely related to schizophrenia (Davidson & Stayner, 1997). Despite suffering from devastating symptoms and social disadvantages, many people with schizophrenia express the view that employment is important to them

(Becker, Bebout, & Drake, 1998; Graffam & Naccarella, 1997) and most of them would like to obtain employment.

Studies conducted in North America consistently show that this population experiences a low level of employment (Cook & Razzano, 2000). Over the last few decades a number of vocational rehabilitation approaches were developed that aimed at improving the employability of people with mental illness, including prevocational training programs, sheltered workshops and transitional employment. However, evidence from the literature suggests that these traditional approaches did not significantly improve the employability of people with schizophrenia in open labour markets (Jacobs, Wissusik, Collier, Stackman, & Burkeman, 1992). Based on this information, it is unclear whether traditional vocational programs address the concerns and needs of people with schizophrenia (Corrigan & Garman, 1997) or whether paid employment is out of question for most of this population.

More recently, *supported employment programs* have been adopted for people with severe and persistent mental illness, including schizophrenia. Preliminary findings from a systematic review on supported employment programs show promising results (Crowther, Marshall, Bond, & Huxley, 2001). The review showed that people with schizophrenia achieved a relatively higher employment rate through supported employment programs than other traditional vocational models. However employment rate is only one indicator of the success of supported employment programs. The views of participants attending the programs have been largely ignored. It appears that there are questions that need to be answered before policy makers or mental health personnel adopt supported employment programs for people with schizophrenia as evidence-based practice.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceived outcomes of participating in a local supported employment program from the perspectives of seven program participants who have been diagnosed with schizophrenia. By using a qualitative approach this study was focused on uncovering program outcomes that are under-represented in the literature and conditions that could potentially influence specific program outcomes.

Research Questions

Four research questions were investigated in this study:

1. What are the experiences and perceptions of program outcomes for people with schizophrenia in supported employment programs?
2. What are the relationships between different perceived program outcomes?
3. How do the perceived program outcomes differ before and after the program participants obtain employment?
4. What are the conditions that influence the perceptions and experiences of program outcomes for those attending?

Overview of the Thesis

In the following section of this chapter, key terms relevant to this study are defined. Chapter two presents a review of the literature. Vocational rehabilitation and employment issues for people with schizophrenia, program evaluations and supported employment programs are discussed.

Chapter three begins with a brief introduction to grounded theory methodology. Then the research methods (research design, setting, ethical considerations, sampling, data collection and analysis procedures) and study trustworthiness are discussed. In addition, characteristics of study-informants are described in this chapter.

Chapter four presents an overview of study findings. In the final chapter, insights on research with people with schizophrenia are first discussed, then the significance of this study's findings are illustrated through comparison with related literature. Implications for supported employment practice, occupational therapy, program evaluations, and future research are presented to conclude the chapter.

Key Terms

Employment: Defined as "work in which one's labour or services are paid for by an employer (Gove, 1993, p.743); in this study, paid employment in an open labour market, interchangeable with the terms "job" and "work".

The chosen agency: Refers to a community vocational agency which offers supported employment program; the selected research setting where study-informants were recruited.

Consumers: Individuals who had mental health concerns and accessed mental health services.

Program participants: Individuals who had registered and participated in the supported employment program offered by the chosen agency.

Study-informants: Individuals who participated in this study; people with schizophrenia who participated in the supported employment program offered by the chosen agency.

Occupation: Within the occupational therapy context, defined as groups of self-directed, functional tasks and activities in which a person engages over the lifespan in order to meet his/her intrinsic needs for self-maintenance, expression and fulfillment (Clark et al., 1991; Law et al., 1996), e.g. productivity, self-care, and leisure.

Chapter II - Literature Review

Literature Review and Grounded Theory

Literature review is an integral part of any research study. In qualitative studies, literature serves addition purposes. In addition to pointing out knowledge gaps, the process of the literature review increases qualitative researchers' sensitivity to the subject matter (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It is especially powerful when the researchers further refine the properties and dimensions of emerging categories by theoretical comparison. Furthermore, a new theory is less useful if it is not integrated into the existing relevant theoretical literature (Glaser, 1978). Literature is therefore reviewed in order to sensitize researchers to potential emerging concepts or when later reviewed to provide explanation of the subject matter.

On the other hand, being too familiar with the existing qualitative findings might block researchers from seeing new concepts and ideas. It is possible that based on a thorough literature review prior to data collection and analysis, researchers form preconceived opinions of the subject matters. In a worst-case scenario, researchers might attempt unconsciously to force new data into known concepts (Glaser, 1978).

Therefore in this study, all related available theoretical literature was reviewed twice at separate times. The principal investigator first focused on identifying the related research at the proposal stage. Then after data were collected and preliminary data analysis was completed, the literature was reviewed again in detail.

In this chapter, a review of the literature on supported employment programs and schizophrenia/mental illness is presented. First the importance of work-related activities for people with schizophrenia is summarized, including some major developments in vocational rehabilitation. Second approaches of current outcome evaluations of mental health programs are considered. Next mental health program participants' perspectives are discussed, followed by a summary of evidence regarding the potential of supported employment programs for people with schizophrenia. To end this chapter, a critique of outcome indicators used in studies of supported employment programs is presented.

Work and People with Schizophrenia

Work is one of the key bases of social life. The concept of work is fundamental to occupational therapy. Central to this concept are two basic assumptions: (1) human need for mastery and self-actualization; and (2) occupational nature of the individual (Harvey-Krefting, 1985). It is believed that being productive is motivated by an intrinsic urge to be effective in the environment and is influenced by cultural tradition through the process of socialization (Kielhofner, 1983). Inevitably in western societies we are commonly defined and recognized by our productivity role.

Some scholars echo the notion that work can be a personal matter. Through producing goods or providing services, work provides a source of self-respect and meaning to us (Pratt & Jacobs, 1997).

Engaging in work or employment is not a privilege but should be considered as a basic human right. In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In Article 23, it states: "Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment" (United Nations, 1998).

Social and/or occupational dysfunctions are common characteristics for people with schizophrenia (Kaplan & Sadock, 1998). In a recent survey of people with schzophrenia, 60% of the respondents reported a desire to obtain paid employment (Mueser, Salyers, & Mueser, 2001). However, people with schizophrenia continue to experience a low employment rate.

Cook and Razzano (2000) conducted an extensive review on vocational rehabilitation for persons with schizophrenia from 1989 to 1999. They found the employment rate (engaged in any kind of vocational activities with pay) for people with schizophrenia was consistently lower than that of other mental/physical disorders or the national employment figure. There are not many published studies in the literature specifically investigating the unemployment rate of people with schizophrenia, but results from Harrow et al.'s (1997) longitudinal study is not encouraging. Seventy-four inpatients with schizophrenia in the Chicago area were followed up for close to a decade and the authors found that less than 20% were employed. Some suggested that having a lifetime history of schizophrenia increases the chance of being unemployed four fold (Bland, Stebelsky, Orn, & Newman, 1988).

Unemployment is associated with more than just financial constraint. Hayes and Halford (1996) examined the impacts of unemployment on male adults with schizophrenia. They found that being unemployed and having schizophrenia was associated with loss of an externally imposed time structure, reduced social contact with others, loss of valued social role and reduced opportunity to use skills and capabilities. It is no surprise that in Mallik, Reeves, and Dellario's (1998) study, subjects (all with a mental illness) rated "lack of employment resources" and "lack of vocational adjustment skills" as two of the major barriers to successful community integration.

Vocational Rehabilitation and People with Schizophrenia

Work has been recognized as a "desirable rehabilitative intervention", especially for people suffering from mental illness. In the United States, the Vocational Rehabilitation Amendments of 1943 (Department of Career Development, Michigan State, 2001) officially extended state vocational services to people with mental illness.

Not too long ago, prevocational skills training programs and sheltered workshops were considered two major vocational rehabilitation options for people with mental illness. However these traditional vocational rehabilitation models rarely lead to employment in the open market (Crowther et al., 2001). More recently, another vocational rehabilitation model has been created: transitional employment. Essentially, it is a paid, time-limited supported work program in community businesses (Macias, Jackson, Schroeder, & Wang, 1999). Participants in transitional employment programs typically work alongside workers with a similar disability. Some studies showed that transitional employment programs demonstrated some success in linking participants to competitive employment (Henry, Barreira, Banks, Brown, & McKay, 2001; Laird & Krown, 1991). Conversely twenty-four published studies between 1966 and 1993 showed traditional vocational rehabilitation programs (including sheltered workshops and transitional employment programs), although "enhancing the vocational activities of people with schizophrenia, do not lead to advantages for competitive employment" (Lehman, 1995, p.654).

To complicate matters, those who suffered from schizophrenia seem to respond less favourably in vocational rehabilitation programs than other diagnoses. In a study comparing the effectiveness of a job finding program in helping people with mental illness acquire employment, participants with schizophrenia had less success in obtaining employment than participants with other kinds of mental disorders (Jacobs et al., 1992).

Supported Employment Programs

First introduced in the 1980's, the supported employment model continues to provoke substantial interest from professionals who provide vocational rehabilitation to people with mental illness. It was first developed in the United States as an initiative to help people with developmental disabilities participate in an open labour market (Jenaro, Mank, Bottomley, Doose, & Tuckerman, 2002). By the mid 1980's, the supported employment program had extended to people with other severe disabilities, including mental illness (Anthony & Blanch, 1987). In 1986, the Rehabilitation Act (P.L. 99-506, first passed in 1973) in the United States was amended to include "obtaining an employment through a supported employment program" as a legitimate outcome of the federal-state vocational rehabilitation system (Inge, Barcus, Brooke, & Everson, 1995).

Principles of Supported Employment Programs

In contrast to other traditional vocational rehabilitation approaches which typically focus on providing training in simulated work environments, the supported employment programs prepare individuals for competitive paid employment in the community through rapidly placing the individual in a competitive paid job, with training and support provided on the job site as needed.

There are six core principles of the supported employment programs: (1) competitive employment is the goal; (2) rapid job search without going through intensive prevocational/work skills training; (3) integration of rehabilitation and mental health; (4) attention to program participants' preferences; (5) continuous and comprehensive assessment; and (6) time-unlimited support (Bond, 1998). Detailed elaboration of the core principles of the supported employment model is beyond the scope of this study, but can be found in recent literature (Bond; Bond, Vogler, et al., 2001).

Wehman (1986) explained the reasons of adopting a supported employment model: (1) most people with severe disabilities are not able to obtain and secure competitive employment without professional help; and (2) skills acquired in an artificial/simulated environment are not easily transferred to a real work environment. In addition, there is evidence suggesting that the cost-benefit of running supported employment programs is superior to that of running traditional vocational programs (Clark, Xie, Becker, & Drake, 1998).

The way that supported employment programs are implemented might vary from one program to another and depend on how principles of supported employment are interpreted. In addition, there is high variability in terms of program priorities and program outcome indicators chosen by supported employment programs, in part, due to the difference in values and interpretation of rehabilitation regulations (Bond, Picone, Mauer, Fishbein, & Strout, 2000; Rogan, Novak, Mank, & Martin, 2002).

Importance of Supported Employment Programs

Incorporating supported employment programs in mental health services is considered as a milestone in mental health practice for two important reasons. First, supported employment programs encourage program participants to engage in competitive employment in an open labour market and to exercise self-determination (Rogan et al., 2002). Second, the success of the supported employment programs has radically shifted the focus of mental health services from 'offering artificial social/vocational programs in a simulated environment' to "targeting true community reintegration". These two points are discussed below.

(1) Competitive employment in open labour market

Because of supported employment programs, some people with severe and persistent mental illness (such as schizophrenia) are now recognized as being capable of working alongside people without disabilities in an open labour market. Proponents of supported employment programs advocate the idea that, as long as on-going support is available, some of the people with mental illness should be encouraged to seek competitive employment without first going through intensive work skills training in a simulated environment (Jenaro et al., 2002). Participants of supported employment programs are encouraged to choose the jobs for which to apply, based on individual job preference and skill level.

(2) Shifting focus of mental health services

By the time there was preliminary evidence suggesting that the supported employment programs were more effective than most other traditional vocational programs in helping people with mental illness to acquire employment, similar approaches were applied to other service areas. New initiatives such as supported education (Anthony, 1992), supported housing (Ogilvie, 1997), and supported volunteering (Woodside & Luis, 1997) have all become other major thrusts in psychiatric rehabilitation.

Program Evaluations

In a fiscal climate of accountability, there are increasing demands for outcome evaluation in mental health services (McFarland & Wuest, 1997). Justifying funding is only one of the many reasons for conducting evaluations; indeed, a well-planned outcome evaluation should provide useful information to decision makers on whether program participants benefit from receiving the services and if not, what needs to be improved (Huxley, 1998). There are different ways to conduct evaluations but the literature in the area of outcome management generally suggests that mental health services should adopt a multi-dimensional approach with an inclusion of clients' perspectives (Blankertz & Cook, 1998; Cone, 2001; Forth & Nasir, 1996; Goeree, 1994; Ogles & Lunnen, 1996; Sederer, Dickey, & Eisen, 1997). In outcome based evaluations it is essential to identify a range of relevant outcomes at the beginning phase (Speer, 1998).

Forth and Nasir (1996, p.4) defined *outcomes* as "the intended and unintended consequences of interventions and activities…the impact or effect of inputs, processes, and outputs on the consumer (or program participant)". Outcomes can be further categorized by *process outcomes* (or short-term outcomes) and *ultimate outcomes* (or long-term outcomes). To put them into perspective, process outcomes are immediate outcomes of a single activity or a set of activities. Process outcomes are the building blocks of the ultimate outcomes. Identifying process outcomes enables us to better understand why certain program outputs are beneficial to the participants and why others fail to deliver the expected results.

Output is another important term in program evaluation literature. Although outcome and output are related, there is an important difference. Output is defined as the concrete goods and services delivered by programs and received by the program participants (Forth & Nasir, 1996). It is important to note that program participants who receive outputs may or may not experience outcomes. Taking vocational rehabilitation as an example, although outputs offered by sheltered workshops (providing work experience programs and work-related training) aim at preparing participants for competitive employment in the future, only some sheltered workshop participants would successfully acquire the ultimate outcome of obtaining competitive employment (Lehman, 1995).

Although different authors might use slightly different terms, Gardner (2000) suggests four perspectives of outcome evaluation: (1) clients; (2) program; (3) system; and (4) society. The combination of all these perspectives should cover all areas of human service programs; and therefore can be parameters for program outcome evaluation. Each group of stakeholders reflects different perspectives with varying interests and priorities. Outcome measure studies with selected foci should emphasize specific aspects of the program; and in no case is one aspect of information more important in any situation than the others (Priebe, 2000). The decision of which perspective to use in program outcome evaluation mostly depends on what kind of information is required.

Importance of Program participants' Perspectives in Program Evaluations

From service delivery perspectives, program participants' views should be incorporated because they have the best knowledge of what matters to them (Rea & Rea, 2000). It is impossible to provide all of what the program participants ask for, but it should be a matter of balance. If services are not meeting program participants' needs program participants may just simply drop out of the program. To understand why the program participants behave or respond in certain ways, the program participants' perspectives should be explored.

Forth and Nasir (1996) suggested that client level measures should include the following: (1) improvements, setbacks or lack of change in program participants' status as a result of the services; (2) the safety and ethical issue of the interventions; (3) program participants' satisfaction with the service received; and (4) the appropriateness and relevance of interventions used for the given program participants' conditions. Although satisfaction surveys are one of the most popular methods of collecting program participants' views of the given program, satisfaction alone it is not very useful in reflecting the effectiveness of the program (Patton, 1997).

Outcomes Indicators of Supported Employment Programs

Outcome indicators are outcomes that are selected for program evaluations to reflect the effects produced by a program or components of a program. Although literature on outcome evaluation of mental health services suggests the necessity of employing outcome indicators from multiple perspectives, very little published outcome evaluation on supported employment programs attended to program participants' perspective. It is common that in program evaluation studies, outcome indicators were selected solely by the funders or service providers based on their particular interests. (Bailey, Ricketts, Becker, Xie, & Drake, 1998; Schneider, 1998). Bond, Drake, Mueser, and Becker (1997) observed that the selection of outcome indicators is largely influenced by local legislation. For example, most studies on supported employment programs conducted in the United States used program participants' employment rate as an outcome indicator probably because federal guidelines define the same as a supported employment program outcome.

Bond et al. (1997) conducted a comprehensive review of studies completed by 1995 that related to supported employment programs for people with severe mental illness. Most of those studies focused on outcome evaluation. The outcomes used in those studies were solely defined by the researchers. Standard labour market indicators or simply supported employment program objectives (rate of obtaining competitive employment, amount of earnings, and number of work hours) were almost exclusively used as the primary outcome indicators of successful program implementation in most of those studies. Non-vocational outcomes (e.g. self-esteem, presence of psychiatric symptoms, satisfaction, hospitalization rate, and quality of life) were sometimes incorporated in some studies; but such outcomes seem to be arbitrary, and rationales of their selection are seldom made explicit.

A review of more recent related literature identified 27 studies published between 1995 and 2002. Almost all of them were conducted in the U.S., and they adopted a wide range of methodology and focus. The majority were randomized trial studies. Some compared the effects of converting long-term day treatment centers to supported employment programs; others investigated outcomes of newly implemented supported employment programs. Some others were secondary data analysis studies. In terms of how outcomes were defined, some studies used selective social and clinical outcomes (such as quality of life, self-esteem, satisfaction, hospitalization rate and symptoms of mental illness), but vocational outcomes were still the primary focus of most of the studies. Table 2-1 in Appendix A provides a summary of the frequency of different outcome indicators being used in those supported employment studies.

Although Young (2001) observed that the selection of outcome indicators in supported employment program studies has increasingly shifted from vocational-oriented to a more recovery-based approach with strong emphasis on participants' experiences, it was not supported by findings of this review.

Some scholars continue to assert that indicators of quality supported employment programs should be employment rate, wages, tenure, or serving people with more significant disabilities (Rogan et al., 2002). It is inevitable that acquiring competitive employment is the primary goal, and should be one of the expected outcomes of supported employment programs. However, previous outcome evaluation studies have failed to address some other unproven possible program outcomes. Little is known about how people with mental illness perceived supported employment program outcomes. Published findings from studies conducted in Canada are rare.

Insights from Related Qualitative Studies

Findings from a few related qualitative studies give additional insight to this subject matter. In a participatory action research study, Camardese and Youngman (1996) observed that for some people with mental illness, positive relationship with co-workers, job dignity, and safety are more important than being able to work longer hours and/or increased earning potential. In a Canadian transitional employment program, thirty-five individuals with mental health issues participated in Strong's (1998) study. The study identified the following perceived meaning of transitional employment: (i) living with a label, (ii) becoming a capable person with a future, (iii) getting on with life, and, (iv) finding a place in this world.

Four published studies on participants' perspectives on aspects of supported employment programs were reviewed. Krupa, Lagarde, Carmichael, Hougham, and Stewart (1998) explored stress as experienced by individuals with a major mental illness who participated in supported employment programs. Krupa et al.'s study-informants reported various sources of stress from job search and different coping strategies, such as neutralizing the emotional impact of the stress, presenting themselves favourably to potential employers, and seeking assistance from their employment coordinators.

Alverson, Becker, and Drake's (1995) study focused on strategies used by the supported employment program participants to maintain health and secure employment. Thirteen (13) participants reported six different strategies: (i) keeping a positive outlook,

(ii) avoiding substance abuse, (iii) using a diverse support network, (iv) using medication strategically, (v) avoiding relapse of illness; and (vi) overcoming stigma.

Torrey and colleagues (1995) examined the perceived impact on program participants two years after a day treatment program was converted to a supported employment program. Data were collected from program participants, their families as well as staff members. Findings suggest that different parties held different perspectives.

Quimby, Drake, and Becker (2001) conducted an ethnographic study of homeless people in a supported employment program and revealed that employed participants shared some of the fundamental work issues similar to people without disabilities. They also found that health and safety was their major concern. Furthermore, their mental health and substance abuse problems tend to be continued despite having competitive employment.

Summary of Literature Review

Literature on people with schizophrenia in supported employment programs and program evaluations was reviewed. Many previous related outcome evaluation studies on supported employment programs focused on standard market indicators (employment rate, employment earnings and job tenure). There is evidence suggesting that the supported employment model is consistently more effective than other traditional vocational rehabilitation models in terms of improving program participants' employment rate. Hence, it is not known whether improving employment rate is the only possible outcome of the supported employment programs and program participants' perspectives on the outcome issue were largely ignored (Bond et al., 1997; Bryson, Bell, Lysaker, & Zito, 1997; Honey, 2000).

Some qualitative studies examined the program participants' experience of stress in job searching and related coping, strategies of maintaining employment, perception on employment issues, and meaning of transitional employment. Findings highlight the uniqueness of program participants' perspectives and provide new insights on the subject matter.

Some key questions, however, remain unanswered. For example, why do some people with schizophrenia in the supported employment program acquire employment and some do not? Having acquired employment, why do not all manage to remain employed? How do people with schizophrenia in the supported employment programs view the vocational outcomes used in the literature? Are there outcomes identified by program participants that have not been recognized by the researchers? Do the supported employment programs generate different outcomes at different stages? These questions will guide service providers and researchers alike to further improve the supported employment model for this specific client population. A qualitative study has the potential to answer some of these important questions.

Chapter III – Research Method

Methodology – Grounded Theory

As the purpose of this study is to explore the construct of supported employment program outcomes from the program participants' perspective of which little is known, a qualitative research approach is appropriate for this study. A qualitative approach allows researchers to take an open stance and to identify concepts from empirical data instead of preconceptions, which is very effective for the research questions of this study. There are a number of qualitative research approaches and each can provide information on a different perspective of a social phenomenon. The decision of which approach to use is primarily dependent on the research perspective and research questions. Ethnography and phenomenology are two other well-established qualitative research approaches but they are less appropriate for this study. Ethnographic studies focus on cultural patterns of a social group (Creswell, 1998) and can be used for studies focusing on describing the cultural patterns of participants in supported employment programs (i.e. program participants' behaviours, customs, and practice, etc.). Phenomenological studies seek to understand the lived experiences of individuals (Morse & Field, 1995) and are useful in providing a thick description of lived experiences, such as looking for job in supported employment programs, attending job interviews, etc.

A grounded theory approach was selected for this study based on the following considerations. First this study is based on the theoretical paradigm that there is no single reality. Central to the study paradigm is that participants in supported employment programs construct their own reality through constantly interpreting and giving meanings to their experiences (of having schizophrenia and attending supported employment programs) within their own social setting (Creswell, 1998). Human behaviours are time- and context-bound (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p.75) and are partially influenced by the meanings each individual gives to the program outputs and outcomes. The grounded theory approach supports this paradigm as the approach attends to meanings given by the study-informants and allows the inclusion of multiple realities, which is appropriate for answering the research questions of this study. Second, the grounded theory approach is useful in illustrating *process*, which is a change of perceived outcomes in response to changes in contexts or conditions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It is evident that some participants in the supported employment programs go through processes of change (from not being in the programs to attending the programs and from being unemployed to being employed). The grounded theory approach is useful in capturing program participants' experiences in these processes and subsequently increases the explanatory power of the study findings.

Grounded Theory Approach

Grounded theory was originally developed by two sociologists, Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, almost four decades ago (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). They suggested that generating new theory systematically and inductively from data is a good method to understand social phenomena. In addition, they asserted that theory grounded from data of the related area can better explain the complexity of social phenomena and human action than theories derived from other substantive areas (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). By the 1980's, the grounded theory approach was steadily gaining popularity among different disciplines. Researchers in nursing, business, psychology and education background have frequently embraced the grounded theory approach in a variety of studies (Creswell, 1998; Glaser, 1999).

A grounded theory approach is a set of systematic research procedures. As this approach aims at capturing the meanings constructed by individuals in a given setting, data are in the form of experiences, perceptions and interpretations delineated by individuals who have rich experiences of the subject matter and are collected by in-depth interviews. Important responses and reactions expressed by the study-informants during the data collection process are recorded as field notes and are used to supplement interview data.

Depending on the extent of data collection, the theory generated is typically substantive. That means it is applicable only to the substantive social area under study and is able to explain some variation in a social phenomenon through some theoretical coverage. The idea is to cover as many variations as the data allow with a few concepts (Glaser, 1978). A substantive theory is perhaps the end product of a given study, but it is not the end of the whole theory generating process. Indeed, any substantive theory is readily modifiable. Details of grounded theory approach can be found in the monographs by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Glaser (1978), and Strauss and Corbin (1998). Constant comparison method and theoretical sampling are two important procedures used jointly in grounded theory approach and are discussed below.

Constant comparison method

Constant comparison method is a technique to identify patterns and differences of emerging concepts by comparing the emerging concepts back and forth with one another and with all the available data. This technique provides two advantages in grounded theory approach. First, the technique aids grounded theorists in developing patterns of concept (the precedents of emerging theory) from data and ensures that the emerging concepts and the emerging theory are grounded from the data only. Second, the technique sensitizes grounded theorists to generate new theoretical hypotheses of the emerging concepts. Theoretical hypotheses are unanswered questions formulated by the researchers when the researchers attempted to clarify the nature of connections between emerging concepts (Glaser, 1978). These theoretical hypotheses need to be tested in order to saturate the emerging theory. In other words, theoretical hypotheses provide directions to researchers for further sampling.

Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling is a sampling technique used in grounded theory approach. This sampling method is guided by the theoretical hypothesis and is an initial step to test the theoretical hypotheses. Based on the identified theoretical gaps in the theory development process, grounded theorists return to the field and further sample relevant incidents and events (not people). Because the emerging concepts guide the breadth and depth of the study, it is almost impossible to predict the number of study-informants are required to saturate the theory. When new data do not contribute to further refining of the emerging theory, a point of saturation is accomplished.

Research Design

This study was designed to capture experiences of people with schizophrenia in a supported employment program. Study-informants were recruited from one program setting. In considering the types of data required for this study and typical clinical presentations of individuals with schizophrenia, it was decided that individual interviews would be used as a primary data collection strategy. Individual interviews minimize distractions from other study-informants and allow study-informants to have as much time as they required for organizing and expressing their thoughts. Furthermore, if the study informants presented any mental health issues during the interviews the principal investigator would have more flexibility and would be able to provide adequate attention to the study-informants in a timely fashion.

The framework of this study was established through referring to the procedures and techniques, suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998). The timeline of this study is illustrated in figure 3-1 (Appendix B) and details of research method are described in the following sections.

Research Setting

All study-informants were recruited from a local community agency in a western Canadian metropolitan city. The agency has a mandate of assisting people with disability in acquiring employment in an open labour market. The agency was the first community agency in the city to provide a comprehensive supported employment program for people with mental illness, although there are some other community agencies in the same city providing similar services to the same client population. After a careful review of the program descriptions (i.e. mandates, program structure, program foci, and service delivery modes, etc.) of all different agencies that provide employment related programs to assist individuals with schizophrenia, it became clear that employment programs provided by different community agencies varied in many ways. The chosen agency appeared to provide the most comprehensive supported employment program, and the core principles they adopted were most similar to the original supported employment model described by Drake (1998) and are discussed in the literature review chapter.

The chosen agency offers a short supported employment preparation program, assists participants in job seeking and helps arrange employment. Based on the program descriptions, each participant would go through the following program process:

1. Potential participants attend an orientation session of supported employment program
2. In-take assessment conducted by the assigned case manager
3. Brief skills training program (duration varies, typically from one to six weeks)
4. Job searching with assistance by case manager
5. Contract negotiation between participant, case manager and potential employer
6. The participants start employment with case manager providing on the site work skills training and support as long as needed

The program is subsidized by the government therefore program participants do not need to pay for the services.

Ethical Considerations

Protecting the rights, anonymity, and safety of study-informants should always be the primary concerns in any research study involving vulnerable populations. This study was reviewed and approved by the Health Research Ethics Board (Panel B: Health Research) in fall 2001. Two potential risks to the study-informants were identified: (1) involuntary disclosure of study-informants' identity, and (2) potential emotional distress. These two issues were carefully addressed.

(1) Confidentiality Issues

Because of the relatively small study-informant population size, it was especially important to protect study-informants' anonymity. First, the principal investigator was careful not to disclose the names of consenting study-informants to staff members at the chosen agency. Study-informants' real names were not recorded on any of the demographic data forms or interview forms. Identification numbers were used on audiotape labels, interview transcripts and data collection forms. The matching list of names was stored securely and separately.

Second, demographic information reported in this thesis is described collectively. In addition, when quoting certain specific identifiable information (such as the name of chosen agency, informants' job duty, location of work, etc.) in the following chapter, that information was replaced with less specific information where possible. The transcript typist, who was hired to transcribe the audio interview data, signed a confidentiality form (See Appendix C) and agreed not to share the data with the third party nor keep copies of the data. All the data collected were kept in a secure file cabinet at the University of Alberta, and were used solely for research purpose (this and future related studies).

(2) Potential Emotional Distress

Another potential risk was the possibility that some of the study-informants might experience increased distress or anxiety during the interviews. The principal investigator discussed this issue with all study-informants during the introduction session. They were informed that if the above situation arose during the interview, the principal investigator would discontinue the interview and the study-informant(s) would be referred to appropriate services if necessary. During the interview, the principal investigator observed each study-informant closely and assessed whether they exhibited any adverse reactions. At the same time, the study-informants were asked intermittently whether the interview should be continued. During the interview, no study-informant displayed or reported any adverse reactions, nor did they ask for mental health assistance.

Sampling Method

In this study, both criterion sampling and theoretical sampling were used. Criterion sampling is a sub-type of purposeful sampling technique. The logic of criterion sampling is to select individuals based on a set of predetermined study-informant selection criteria (Patton, 1990). The selection criteria enabled individuals who have rich and broad personal experiences of supported employment program outcomes to become the study-informants.

Theoretical sampling was utilized in two instances to sample concepts. Firstly, at the initial stage of the study the principal investigator hypothesized that employment status might be a condition that influenced the perceived program outcomes. In order to examine this supposition, case managers were instructed to first identify potential study-informants who were employed at that time. As a result, the principal investigator was able to recruit and interview two employed study-informants and develop some preliminary concepts from the data. With those concepts in mind, the principal investigator was more sensitive to both similar and contrasting ideas provided by other study-informants who were not employed.

Secondly, when study-informants gave ideas that were similar to the emerging concepts developed from previous interviews, the principal investigator would encourage the study-informants to further elaborate those ideas. For example, the concept "reason of coming to the chosen agency" was identified at the first interview. The third study-informant expressed some negative feelings about the chosen agency but continued to go to the agency. Therefore at that moment, the principal investigator asked that study-informant to further explain the reason for continuously attending the program. The same question was used subsequently in the remaining interviews.

Selection Criteria

There were four study-informant selection criteria and they were determined by the principal investigator:

1. Male or female between age of 20 to 65
2. Registered as program participants of the chosen agency

3. Already participated in the supported employment program
4. Diagnosed with schizophrenia according to Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV-TR. (American Psychiatric Association, 2000)

Study-informants Recruitment

Recruitment Procedures

At the planning stage of this study, an agreement was made with the directors of the chosen agency and full support from the agency was guaranteed. The procedures of study-informant recruitment were identical for both the pilot and research study, and they were as follows:

1. Case managers identified potential study-informants from all supported employment program participants at the chosen agency based on the listed study-informant selection criteria.
2. The case managers made initial contact with each potential study-informant. The contacts were made either by phone or the case manager would bring it up during a routine meeting at the chosen agency. The case managers briefly explained to the potential study-informants the purpose and nature of the individual introduction session, and invited them to meet with the principal investigator.
3. If the potential study-informants agreed to participate in the introduction session, the case manager would assist in setting the meeting at a mutually agreeable date and time. All the session appointments were set up at least three days in advance to give potential study-informants sufficient notice.

4. The individual introduction sessions were all conducted in a private office at the chosen agency except for one, which was conducted on a unit of a local hospital. That particular potential study-informant met all the selection criteria, but had been recently admitted to the hospital. He/She was about to be discharged according to a health care staff member at the unit.
5. At each introduction session, the case manager introduced the principal investigator to the potential study-informant. Then in the presence of the case manager, the principal investigator presented the study details and explained to the study-informant that his/her participation was voluntary. The study-informants were given opportunities to ask as many questions as they would like. For the particular session held in the hospital, the same health care staff member on the unit introduced the principal investigator to the individual.
6. The purpose of having the case manager / health care staff member in the introduction session was to minimize the anxiety that the potential study-informants might experience. The case manager / health care staff member was the person whom the potential study-informants knew the best and were probably most comfortable with. The principal investigator, on the other hand, was a total stranger to all of the study-informants except one. One of the potential study-informants was an ex-patient of a mental health hospital where the principal investigator was employed.
7. Right after the introduction session, the case manager / health care staff member would leave the office, leaving the principal investigator and the potential study-informants alone to further discuss whether he /she would agree to participate in the study.

8. In most cases, the potential study-informants were able to make a decision in regards to study participation shortly after the introduction session. Only one potential study-informant requested more time to consider it, but allowed the principal investigator to make the second contact in a few days. Subsequently, the principal investigator contacted that potential study-informant three days later by phone.

Obtaining Informed Consent

At the introduction session, the principal investigator explained the purposes of this study to every potential study-informant. The expected duration, the nature of participation, a description of the study procedures (including the requirement and rationale of tape recording the whole interview process), confidentiality issues, withdrawal issues, and the study informants' rights were highlighted. The foreseeable harms and benefits of this study were also pointed out. The study-informants were fully aware that they have the right to attend the supported employment program without participating in this study.

Informed consent was collected by having the study informants understand the details of the consent information sheet (Appendix D) and sign a consent form (Appendix E). After the consent form was signed, the informants still had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to refuse to answer any questions during the interview without any consequence. For this study, one pilot study-informant had signed the consent form but decided later on to withdraw from the study. The name, and contact information of the directors of the agency, chairperson of the ethical review board and an independent faculty contact were provided as written material to all potential study-informants in case of concerns, or complaints.

Number of Study-informants

Literature does not support the need to have a pre-determined sample size in qualitative research (Patton, 1990). As a general rule, the investigator continues to collect data from consenting informants until new themes no longer emerge and each category is well developed - saturation of data (Mayan, 2001; Patton, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Additional considerations include availability of resources, time schedule and access to potential study-informants (Strauss & Corbin). Based on all those factors, it had been originally decided that a maximum of 10 informants would be selected, or until the saturation of data occurred, whichever came first. During the four-month data collection period, 7 potential study-informants agreed and participated in the study.

Characteristics of Study-informants

The study-informants included four women and three men. Their age ranged from 20's to 50's. Their educational background varied, but most of them had a least high school education. It ranged from completing Grade 9 to the highest of completing two years of courses at university or college level. Before participants commenced the supported employment program at the chosen agency, they had all been employed in the open labour market intermittently in a range from 2 to 18 years. No matter how long the study-informants had been employed previously, all of them had worked in a number of different jobs and no single study-informant stayed at the same job over their working life. The study-informants did not explain why they had changed jobs.

In terms of mental health history, all been diagnosed with schizophrenia. One study-informant had never been admitted to any psychiatric hospital. For the rest, the age of their first admission to a psychiatric hospital ranged from early 20's to early 40's. The maximum number of previous psychiatric hospital admissions among the study-informants was four. It was difficult to determine the exact date of onset of their illness, as the symptoms of onset are quite subtle and most people who suffer from mental illness don't recognize the need for medical attention until years later. Study-informants reported that the number of years between their first admission to a psychiatric hospital to the date of data collection for this study ranged from 2.5 to 22 years.

Finally, in terms of supported employment program history, the study-informants had been in the program from 4 to 17 months. During the time of the interviews, 4 out of 7 of them were employed in the open labour market.

Data Collection

Data Collection Format

The program participants were interviewed at the chosen agency using a combination of open-ended and semi-structured questions to allow study-informants to express themselves freely. Study-informants were interviewed one at a time. At each interview, the principal investigator first collected demographic, medical, educational and previous employment information to allow the study-informants to relax and to focus on the interview. Please refer to Appendix F for the Demographic Data Form. As the interview proceeded, the principal investigator used an interview protocol (Appendix G) to guide the interview process. The interview protocol started with a key open-ended statement:

> **"Tell me about your experience of participating in this supported employment program."**

A set of semi-structured interview questions is also included in the interview protocol. They were probe questions and were used when the study-informants gave only short answers to the above open-ended statement. The probe questions aimed at facilitating the study-informants in commenting on the different aspects of the supported employment program. In addition there were some probe questions exploring conditions that might have impacted on the perceived program outcomes.

Pilot Study

It is important to test the effectiveness and clarity of interview questions through pilot interviews before using them for the actual study (Carpenter, 2000). Preferably those participating in the pilot study should have very similar characteristics to those of the actual study-informants. Because of small number of study-informants available for this study, pilot study-informants were selected from a slightly different population: program participants who met all selection criteria, except with a diagnosis of mental illness other than schizophrenia. Two such program participants were selected from the chosen agency and they participated in the pilot study. At the end of each pilot study interview session the pilot study-informants were asked for feedback regarding the clarity of interview questions. Their feedback as well as the pilot study data reflected that the interview questions are generally appropriate for the research objectives. However, the pilot study-informants tended not to elaborate their ideas very thoroughly, and that prompted the principal investigator to add an additional set of clarifying questions. Those clarifying questions were used in conjuction with the interview protocol for the entire study. Please refer to Appendix H for the additional questions.

Interview Process

Five study-informants were interviewed once. Two study-informants agreed with the principal investigator to split their interviews into two because they had to leave the interview for other appointments before finishing all interview questions. No time limit was set for the interview, but each interview typically lasted for about an hour.

All except 1 study-informant requested to have the interview conducted right after their individual introduction session. That study-informant specifically requested and was interviewed 3 days after the introduction session was held.

Although study-informants were given the choice to have the interview conducted away from the chosen agency, all of them preferred to be interviewed in a private office at the chosen agency. Study-informants' transportation costs were reimbursed by the principal investigator if they came to the interview by public transport.

Each interview was audiotaped for accurate verbatim transcription. The principal investigator also made field notes immediately after each interview to record the principal investigator's reflections, comments, observations, and study-informants' reactions. Writing field notes during interviews unavoidably interrupts the flow of the interview and can be a source of distraction to study-informants.

Using a tape recorder during an interview with people who are suffering from schizophrenia is controversial but is not uncommon. To address this potential problem, the principal investigator explained to all potential study-informants the purpose of tape recording before the interview started. In addition, audiotaping was included in the consent form.

All interviews were scheduled at the study-informants' free time, and interruption of their normal program routine or work schedule was kept minimal. The time chart in figure 3-2 shows the schedules of introduction sessions and interview sessions for all study-informants in both pilot study and actual study phase.

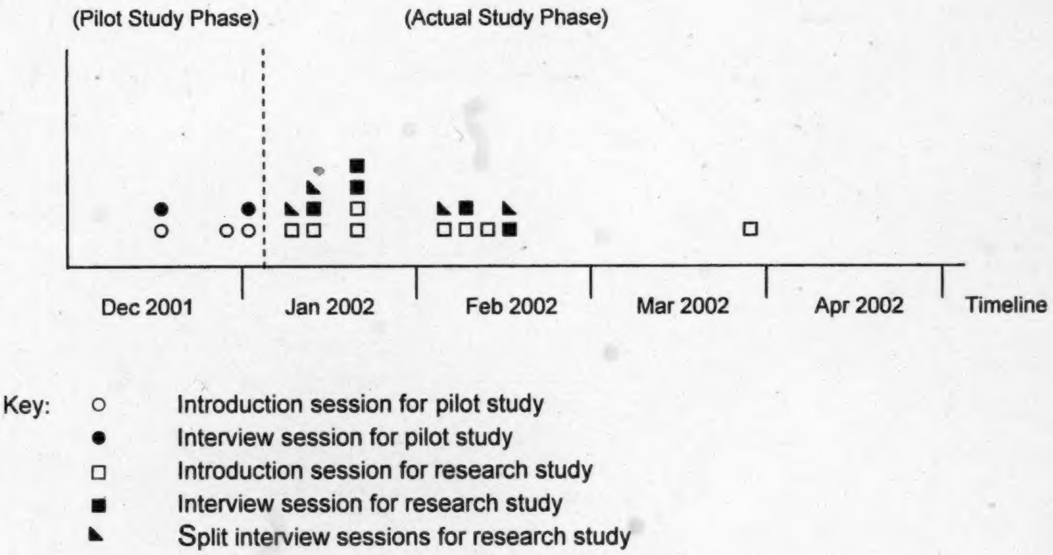

Figure 3-2. Timeline of introduction and interview sessions schedules.

Data Analysis

Reflecting the amount of available data, the objective of data analysis was set to *build* a substantive theory that delineates supported employment program outcomes. After each interview, the audio data were transcribed verbatim to digital text format (Micro[illegible] Word files) as soon as possible by a transcript typist. The principal investigator's role at this stage was to ensure each transcription attained its highest level of accuracy and was done by verifying the written transcription with the audio data. The cassette tapes (audio data), the computer disks (data in digital format), as well as copies of printed transcription are kept in a secure file cabinet in the University of Alberta.

Data analysis was conducted through writing theoretical labels and codes directly on to the two-inch right margin of the printed transcripts. Commercial software packages have been increasingly used in organizing qualitative data. However, it was not used in this study because the principal investigator preferred to gain experience in analyzing the data manually.

Analytic Process

The data analysis process can be divided into three major steps: Open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the actual data analysis process, these three steps were performed simultaneously in a very flexible manner. The following is a brief description of each procedure.

Open coding is the analytic process of identifying concepts from the data. A concept can be considered as a "labeled phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.103). In the data, some significant events, descriptions and happenings represent abstractly a similar phenomenon and therefore were grouped to become an emerging concept. For example, the following descriptions from different study-informants were grouped under the concept "access to electronic equipment":

> "There's the equipment here, like the fax machine, the access to the job openings. So I think this is a very, very good federal funded agency to help disabled people get full-time or part-time work." (1-269)
>
> "I do have access, actually, to their resources here, like the computer, fax machine, printer. So I can also print up copies of my resumé here send them off. I can apply for jobs over the Internet as well." (2-186)
>
> "Here? [pause] I have used the computer here to look for jobs, …" (7-636)

The emerging concepts were then constantly compared with other data as well as all other emerging concepts throughout the data analysis process. The comparisons were made back and forth from both within and across study-informants. Eventually, concepts that stand for similar phenomenon are grouped together to form a category. At this stage each identified category was only preliminary and would be further verified and refined with incoming data.

Axial coding is the next analytic process, which relates categories to their subcategories by identifying the linkage of variety of conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences associated with a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Conditions, actions/ interactions, and consequences alone are not the main foci of this step. Rather, they were used to provide clues as to how different categories could be related to each other in order to heighten the abstraction level of a few major categories.

Selective coding is the final step of all three coding procedures. It is the process of discovering the central category, which can be considered as the main theme of the research findings. It is important to note that the central category is an interpretation of what the data are all about, based on a theoretical orientation and the research questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Different researchers, with a different theoretical orientation and different research questions might come up with a slightly different central category. It does not mean that one interpretation is more accurate than the other; instead, it highlights the fact that any given phenomenon is multifaceted. A unique strength of grounded theory approach is its ability to recognize the complexity of what are seemingly routine daily occurrences.

The actual data analysis procedures performed for this study are described in the following sections.

Open coding

Once the transcribed data are verified, the open coding procedure began as follows:

1. The principal investigator recognized one condition that might potentially influence the overall supported employment outcomes: employment status. In order to maximize the principal investigator's sensitivity during the data analysis, it was decided that data collected from study-informants who were employed in the open labour market during the time of interview were separated from those who were not, and the two groups of data were analyzed separately at the open coding stage.
2. Initially the focus was on describing the data. The principal investigator at first closely examined the first two sets of transcribed interview data phrase-by-phrase. Particular attention was paid in the contexts of *outcomes*, *consequences*, *effects*, *change* and *results*.

3. Key phrases of similar meaning were grouped together to form categories. A label was given to each category to indicate the very concept of those key phrases. For example, the following key phrases: "earning some money", "have extra money", "extra spending money", and "a paycheque coming to you" are grouped together and given a label "employment earnings". Once categories were identified, additional attention was paid to discovering the properties and their dimensions for each category from the data. By using phrase-by-phrase analysis, many different categories were successfully identified from data of the first two interviews.
4. Data from the remaining five study-informants were used to continue refining the existing categories by line-by-line analysis. When there were new concepts that could not fit into existing categories, a new category was created. Table 3-1 in Appendix I shows two of the identified categories. It is an illustration of how data were transcended to concepts, and then to categories.
5. Memos were made throughout the data analysis process to record the principal investigator's thoughts on each category and the progress of the study, especially when there were issues coming up that might require further verification from data. For example, one study-informant described that attending social-oriented day programs was "a waste of time". While the principal investigator extracted "a waste of time" as a concept, a memo was made at the same time to record several theoretical questions: Why did the study-informant feel that it is a waste of time to participate in those activities? What are the characteristics of activities that were perceived as a waste of time? What are the differences between activities at day program and those at supported employment programs?

6. The principal investigator also kept a personal journal (apart from memo writing) to record any personal biases, assumptions, feelings and reflections. Both the memos and personal journal were reviewed throughout in order to further sensitize the data analysis process.

Axial coding

Relationships between identified categories were identified with ongoing verification of data through the following steps:

1. The principal investigator first laid out the properties and dimensions of each category. Relationships between categories were identified from the data. Certain categories can be related to a single category and therefore were re-defined as sub-categories.
2. The principal investigator referred intermittently to the 18 families of theoretical code (Glaser, 1978) in order to increase the sensitivity (Appendix J). It is noted that these suggested codes were used only as a reference; other possible types of linkage were continued to be explored through constantly comparing incidents and concepts in the available data.
3. The difference in terms of pattern of categories before and after the study-informants obtained employment was examined.
4. Individual concept diagrams based on data from each study-informant were created. These individual concept diagrams were used as a blueprint to identify central categories as well as the substantive theory later on.

5. It occurred in a few instances that the principal investigator was unable to establish a relationship between two categories. In other instances, a linkage was identified but was incomplete. In either case, the principal investigator would return to the data to look for clues, which might have been overlooked.
6. An overall concept diagram was created by combining all the individual concept diagrams. Effort was made to continuously refine the relationships among categories through ongoing validation.

Selective coding

This is the step of integrating all the categories to build a substantive theory delineating the supported employment program outcomes. At this stage, categories were further related at the highest possible abstraction level. Finally, the substantive theory was validated again with the data in terms of consistency and logic. Excessive concepts were trimmed and duplicated ideas were combined.

Study Trustworthiness

Unlike quantitative studies, qualitative research employs different approaches to ensure rigour of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1986) developed four criteria of trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability), which are parallel with the rigour of scientific inquiry. There are different issues pertaining to the study trustworthiness. Some of those issues that are relevant to this study are discussed in this section.

Credibility

Credibility of a study refers to the "true value" of the study. A qualitative study with good credibility means that the data collected accurately reflect the perceived realities of the study-informants or the phenomenon under investigation (Sandelowski, 1986). A number of strategies were employed.

1. **Purposeful Sampling**: Study-informant selection criteria were carefully formulated so that only the individuals who were able to provide relevant and rich information about the experiences of having schizophrenia and outcomes of supported employment programs were included in this study.
2. **Identification of negative cases**: The principal investigator considered all data as important insights, even for those data that did not fit the emergent theory. Those unfit data were carefully examined in order to identify any possible hidden linkage or relationship with categories that fit the emergent theory.
3. **Neutral stance**: To maintain a neutral stance to the affair of the chosen agency, the principal investigator avoided being affiliated with the chosen agency in any aspect. Principal investigator's neutral position was made clear to all study-informants in order to encourage the study-informants to give honest, and accurate information about the program during the interviews.
4. **Audiotaping**: All interviews were audiotaped to ensure that the transcribed data (major source of data for analysis) are accurate records of what the study-informants had stated in the interviews. Also during the first few minutes of each interview, the principal investigator ensured the audiotaping machine was recording clearly all the

audio data from the interviews by monitoring the quality of recording with a headphone.

5. **Data verification**: During the interview, the principal investigator periodically verified the reported key ideas with the study-informants. The principal investigator would paraphrase key ideas for study-informants to comment. In addition, when study-informants used words or phrases that have multiple meanings such as "muddle", and "lower category"; the principal investigator would clarify with the study-informants the exact meaning of the words used by asking the question: "Please excuse me, what do you mean by (words)?"

Transferability

Transferability of a study refers to the extent in which the study findings can be applied to other social settings. The degree of transferability is directly related to the goodness of fit between the two settings and the level of abstraction of the findings. It was addressed as follows:

1. **Clear descriptions**: A substantial amount of clear description about the study-informants, issues, the chosen agency and the details of the supported employment program are made available in this thesis. Readers can therefore compare this information with other situations or populations and subsequently determine the transferability of findings of this study.
2. **Level of abstraction**: As a general rule, the higher the level of abstraction of study findings, the greater the transferability. Effort had been made to raise the abstraction

level of identified supported employment outcomes as well as the central category to their highest possible level based on the available data.

Dependability

Dependability concerns the degree of consistency of study findings if the study was conducted under similar circumstances with the presence of similar conditions. To increase the dependability of this study, the principal investigator had recorded details of how decisions were made: analysis, insights, and the actual study procedures (audit trail) as recommended by Morse and Field (1995). Part of the audit trail includes drafts of study findings (i.e. previous versions of conceptual diagrams of categories / the emerging theory, organization of categories and sub-categories, etc.). Audit trail was in digital text format for easy access by the principal investigator.

Other investigators, who followed that audit trail, should be able to track the process, the findings and the theory building. Some important parts of the audit trail were re-written and incorporated in this thesis.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree of neutrality of findings (Sandelowski, 1986). It is believed that in qualitative study total objectivity is almost impossible to achieve, and the best researchers can do is to bracket their own personal assumptions and biases (Ahern, 1999). The principal investigator utilized the following approaches:

1. **Researcher's Reflection**: During the study, the principal investigator had kept a personal journal and part of the journal includes the principal investigator's personal

attitudes on people with schizophrenia and employment issues, clinical experiences gained from daily practice in mental health hospitals, and motivations of conducting this research study. The idea is to understand the possible effects of the principal investigator on the whole research process.

2. **Bracketing**: Conscious effort was made throughout the data analysis and reporting process to examine and challenge the possible contamination of neutrality by the principal investigator's attitudes, clinical experiences and motivation. Throughout the data analysis process the principal investigator regularly reviewed the emerging categories and concepts with reference to the reflection recorded in the personal journal. This procedure aimed at ensuring that research findings are supported by data only, not by any personal expectations. This process was further assisted by having regular discussion with the principal investigator's thesis supervisor, who is an experienced qualitative researcher.

Summary of Research Method

Grounded theory approach was selected for this study as the approach is congruent with the theoretical perspective of this study and is considered appropriate to the set research questions. Details of research procedures used in this study, including research setting, ethical considerations, sampling, data collection procedures, data analysis method, and study trustworthiness are described in this chapter. In chapter IV, findings generated from the data by the above procedures are presented.

Chapter IV – Findings

This chapter presents findings generated from all available interview data, principal investigator's memo and field notes. The findings are a conceptual delineation of the outcomes of a supported employment program from a single perspective: the program participants' perspective. As open-ended questions were used throughout the interviews, study-informants were not only able to share their first-hand experiences of the program outcomes, but also additional insights related to disability and employment. Study-informants described different aspects of their experiences in the program and one consistent and dominant theme emerged: *becoming more prepared.*

In the following sections, findings that represent the contextual conditions of the central category are first presented. There are two identified contextual conditions and they are so closely interwoven with the central category and its components that the former gives meaning to the latter. Therefore, the contextual conditions are presented at the beginning of this chapter.

Second, the central category and its components are discussed in greater detail. Essentially, the components are six primary and three secondary program outcomes and they can be considered as the nuts and bolts of the central category. Afterwards the emerging intervening conditions of the central category are highlighted. Intervening conditions are incidents or circumstances that have an influence on the consequences and outcomes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), and they were identified and grouped with reference to the Person-environment-occupation (PEO) model proposed by Law et al. (1996). There are three different groups of intervening conditions: (1) *personal,* (2) *environmental,* and (3) *person-occupational interaction.* At the end, strategies that were used by the study-informants to maintain components of the central category are explained.

Throughout the chapter, quotes and dialogues from the data are cited to support themes. All gender specific pronouns in the quotes, dialogues, and narratives in this chapter (i.e. *he*, *she*, *his*, *her*, *him*, etc.) were replaced with gender-neutral pronouns – *he/she*, *his/her*, and *him/her* to further protect the anonymity of study-informants. In addition, conceptual diagrams are used intermittently to aid in illustrating abstract ideas. There are some identified categories that are theoretically interesting but are deemed irrelevant to the research questions. One such example is study-informants' opinions on other individuals with mental illness. They are not included in this thesis.

Table 4-1 is a summary of all identified categories and their relationships with the central category. Figure 4-1 is a conceptual diagram illustrating the interplay between different conditions and the central category.

Table 4-1

Summary of central category, and all other related categories identified from data.

A. Contextual Conditions of Central Category

1. Difficulty in acquiring employment
2. Making life better for self (a process)

B. Central Category

"Becoming more prepared – to make life better for self"

Components of Central Category

Primary Program Outcomes	***Secondary Program Outcomes***
1. Having ability to perform effective job seeking	
2. Increased knowledge and skills on employment	
3. Forming a partnership	
4. Becoming reassured	
5. Achieving a better self-image	
6. Obtaining employment (a critical juncture leads to secondary program outcomes)	6.1 Confirming own competence and potential 6.2 Building a life 6.3 Refining work skills and knowledge

C. Intervening Conditions of Central Category

Personal	***Environmental***	***Person-occupation Interaction***
1. Work readiness 2. Work ethic 3. Medication	1. Program level – Facilitating 2. System level – Disability income policy	1. Employment match 2. Program match

D. Strategies

1. Maintaining primary program outcomes

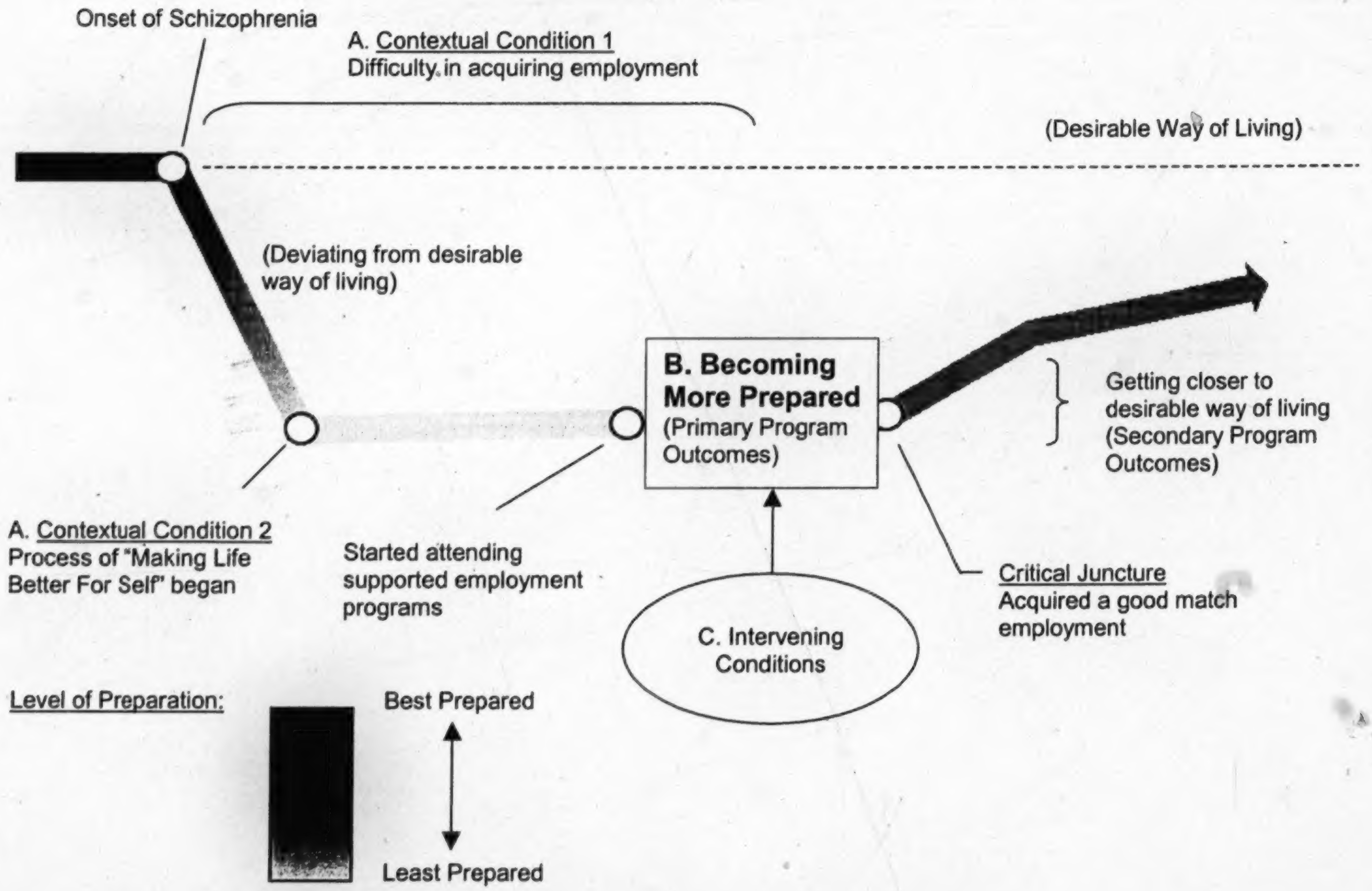
Onset of Schizophrenia
A. Contextual Condition 1
Difficulty in acquiring employment
(Desirable Way of Living)
(Deviating from desirable way of living)
B. Becoming More Prepared
(Primary Program Outcomes)
Getting closer to desirable way of living (Secondary Program Outcomes)
A. Contextual Condition 2
Process of "Making Life Better For Self" began
Started attending supported employment programs
Critical Juncture
Acquired a good match employment
C. Intervening Conditions
Level of Preparation:
Best Prepared
Least Prepared

Figure 4-1. Conceptual diagram of the central category *becoming more prepared* and related conditions.

Contextual Conditions

Contextual conditions create sets of situations or problems to which individuals respond through actions/interactions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The two contextual conditions of the central category identified in this study are: (1) *Difficulty in acquiring employment,* and (2) m*aking life better for self.* Data show that these two contextual conditions prompted the study-informants to attend the supported employment program.

Difficulty in Acquiring Employment

Supported employment program participants all had a documented disability. In this study all study-informants were diagnosed with schizophrenia, a disabling mental illness. Schizophrenia refers to a cluster of symptoms, which affect a person's mental ability. One area is the perceptions and interpretations of what is happening around those affected by schizophrenia. Almost all study-informants related having schizophrenia as having "mental problems". Although others cannot see a person's disturbed mind, it becomes noticeable when the person acts upon his/her disturbed mind with resulting difficulty in performing even the most basic daily activities. One study-informant explained such difficulty in one incident at the chosen agency:

> I have paranoia thoughts all the time. They're getting a lot better, but [pause] I don't know… that one time I got really anxious here [at the chosen agency], and I felt scared and I had to leave. I was just too stressed. [3-239]

It can be quite troublesome when people with schizophrenia attempt to cope with such mental problems in employment-related situations. Taking job interviews as an example, interviewees cannot just leave in the middle of job interview because of being stressed. It is not surprising that all study-informants consistently expressed difficulty in acquiring open employment. Data suggest a number of contributing factors and most of them could be traced back to the origin of having mental problems. Figure 4-2 conceptualizes the relationship between having mental problems and difficulty in acquiring employment.

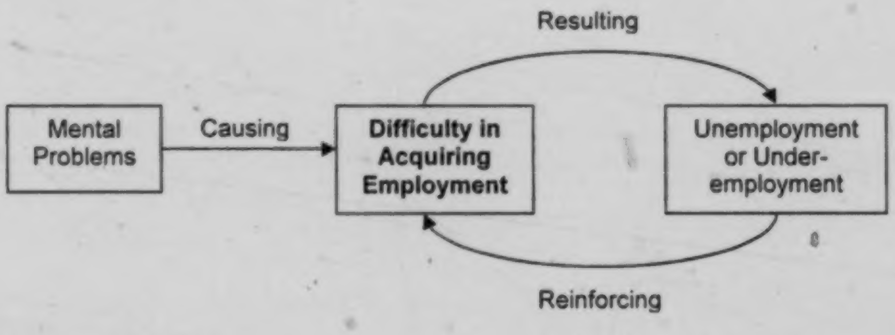
Resulting
Mental Problems
Causing
Difficulty in Acquiring Employment
Unemployment or Under-employment
Reinforcing

Figure 4-2. Relationship between mental problems and difficulty in acquiring employment.

Study-informants were quite aware of the impact of having mental problems on acquiring employment.

> I've got a severe muddle and extreme paranoia… I'm always fearful of people stabbing me in the back and induce this paranoia[,] which became more paranoid and more muddled as people made fun of me… Because of my muddle, I went on job interviews, but because of my mental muddle, a lot of people on the interview saw that, and I would never get the job. [1-25]

In addition to mental problems, schizophrenia also affects other aspects of functioning. One study-informant expressed how the illness impairs his/her physical stamina.

> Most days, I feel really happy, but at the same time, I feel sad, because my illness tires me out a lot. I'm not tired every day, but most days, I am. People don't understand that it's the disease at work, it's not that the person's lazy or doesn't want to do anything. It's just the schizophrenia itself. I feel sad because they don't understand. [6-192]

One immediate consequence of having difficulty in acquiring open employment is underemployment or unemployment. One study-informant used to be a stenographer-receptionist of a private firm and equipped with many years of related work experience. He/She had not been able to acquire employments that matched his/her work experience or qualification since the onset of schizophrenia. In order to stay employed, he/she reluctantly took on different "low class labour" such as "cleaning houses", and "digging potato holes". He/She explained in the interview:

> Well, I was cleaning houses because of my muddle for the last 20 years. I couldn't get a job because of my mental handicap. [1-171]

Some other study-informants with less work experience had tried very hard to acquire employment but without success:

> Yeah, it was a good 6 months, because I had trouble finding work after — I'm just trying to think here. What was I doing? [pause] It's difficult to remember. [pause] What the heck *was* I doing? [pause] Not a whole heck of a lot. No, I wasn't doing much. [7-226]

> Oh, [before I came to the chosen agency, I was unemployed for] quite a long time. I'd say about a year and a half, 2 years. [6-70]

The consequences of underemployment and unemployment vary, depending on individuals' aspirations and values regarding paid employment. One consequence of unemployment was decreased financial resource. For study-informants who saw employment income as a major resource of basic living, unemployment inevitably took a heavy emotional toll on them:

> Before that, I was really down. I wasn't myself. I was really depressed. I was even crying in [my case manager's] office one day… 'Cause I had no job and I had no money coming in. I was worried about how I was going to pay my rent, and stuff like that. [6-614]

> I wasn't too happy about [having to leave the job]. [laughs] I figured I had a nice steady job that I wouldn't have to worry about money, type of thing. It's nice to have a job. If you don't have a job, you don't have much. [7-400]

Looking for employment requires certain equipment and resources. Performing job searches and applications for an extended period of time creates an economic burden on people living within a limited income.

> I have a computer, but it's broken. A computer [to access] the job search banks, newspapers I would have had to buy myself. And when I wasn't working, buying a newspaper every day would have been really — I don't know how much *The Journal* costs. [5-434]

Another problem associated with unemployment is the lack of opportunity to accumulate work experience. In the long term, one might easily lose touch with the current workplace in regards to expectations and requirements, and consequently become even less sure of the ability to handle different aspects of employment. One study-informant expressed his/her uncertainty in job seeking:

> Interviewer: What was your experience [in job seeking]?
>
> Informant: Well, sometimes I got lucky and found a job at EI [Employment Insurance office]. Mostly, it was quite frustrating, because they wanted you to have more experience, or you didn't have the right look, or they wouldn't hire you for whatever reason. I think basically because I didn't have enough experience, they wouldn't hire me.
>
> Interviewer: What do you mean that you don't have the "right look"?
>
> Informant: I'm not a clean-cut-looking young boy/girl. I don't know. I don't know… Maybe I'm too young-looking or something. Maybe they want somebody older. Maybe they want — I don't know. I don't know what employers' expectations are. It varies from place to place. [7-243]

Some study-informants had been unemployed for quite some time and later on decided to re-enter the workforce. Performing a job hunt (preparing a resume, setting up a job interview, etc.) on their own without any support or assistance was portrayed by the study-informants as overwhelming, especially when expectations seemed to be less clear after being unemployed for quite some time.

> Well, it's kind of hard, at times, to function alone. You don't know where to start, where to go for interviews, you've got to get a resumé, you've got to get an application filled out. [1-274]

Other consequences of unemployment were more abstract but similarly personal. One study-informant described his/her experience of being unemployed as "walk[ing] around in a daydream", and "not in touch with reality as much.".

All of these circumstances highlight how unemployment or under-employment makes it harder to acquire employment. As shown previously in figure 4-2, "difficulty in acquiring employment" and "underemployment / unemployment" reinforce each other to create a vicious cycle making it very difficult for some unemployed individuals with schizophrenia to acquire employment.

Process: Making Life Better for Self

Unemployment comes with excessive free time and many study-informants had chosen other activity options in order to fill the day. A decrease in financial resources limited study-informants' activity options and engaging in low/no cost solitary activities, such as "watching television", "going for walks / coffee", and "reading newspaper" were some examples of commonly cited activity options in this study. Another alternative was attending day programs offered by community-based agencies.

There were different day programs offered in the city. Some were social-oriented and others were vocational-based (e.g. supported employment programs). The chosen agency is an independent community service provider and is not directly associated with the provincial mental health services. The supported employment program provided by the chosen agency is not part of the standard community mental health services and therefore not every person with schizophrenia in the city would be referred to the chosen agency. Even though individuals were referred they are able to choose not to attend the program.

It did not take very long before the study-informants realized that there were no easy alternatives to employment. Having something to do during the day did not resolve the problems that arose from unemployment. One study-informant explained how his/her concerned parents got involved and it created unavoidable tension because of his/her unemployment:

> I was really bad before when I was living with my parents. All I would do is sleep all day and sit around and smoke cigarettes. So finally, they told me, "If you're not going to work, you're not going to be able to stay here,..." [6-245]

Some study-informants expressed dissatisfaction with attending social-oriented community day programs. They felt that the day programs were "boring" and did not meet their needs. One study-informant explained:

> Because I was going to [a local community mental health centre] before I was job-hunting, and those programs are designed for people that are extremely low-functioning, and I'm not the lowest functioning person. I'm not bottom of the barrel for functioning level. That's sort of what is bad about the day programs in this city, is they're like that. [5-84] ... The program was designed for people that don't mind just sitting around all day doing nothing, whereas for me, that was the most boring time in my life, and [pause] it sucked! [laughs] [5-148]... Because [pause] [other participants] don't act like normal people, generally. They will tell you, "Leave me alone." All they want to do is sit there and do nothing, some of them. Don't want to play a game of cards or anything. Also, at [there], I would run into people going to me, "Can I borrow 25 cents for a coffee?" — like, 10 people a day. That type of thing... Like they're wanting to use me. [5-681]

A strong sense of frustration and dissatisfaction did not deter study-informants from carrying on with life; indeed, the situations only made the study-informants more determined to improve their life situation. As one study-informant commented: "We're people, too. We've got a life to live, we've got to function." [1-106]

Study-informants recognized that one potential measure to improve their life situation and to make their life better might lie in becoming employed.

> A lot of times, when you're paranoid, you don't want to even talk to anyone. Sometimes I don't even talk to people in a day. You need work just to have the sense of [pause] being a part of something, making a difference. [3-411]

Some study-informants had continued to work intermittently in an open labour market for years since the onset of schizophrenia. Others although finding acquiring paid employment no easy matter, never gave up the idea of having employment.

All study-informants consistently expressed the desire of obtaining paid employment. When asked why they attended the supported employment program at the chosen agency, the answer "because I wanted to get a job" was almost always their first response. As one study-informant asserted without much hesitation:

> I want a job. [both laugh] That's why I came down here, because I was looking for work. That's why I stayed in, and I figured I'd get something out of it. [7-342]

Their experiences of suffering from mental problems set the stage of their ongoing struggle with employment disadvantages and consequently deviating from a desirable way of living. Their desire to navigate their lives back to the preferred path may explain why the study-informants decided to participate in supported employment in the first place.

> If I didn't have a medical condition, I wouldn't be here, for one thing. Yeah, if I didn't have a medical — I wouldn't be here. I mean, I'd be out on my own, looking for a job, so I guess that's the biggest one. [7-499]

It is quite clear that the reason why study-informants first decided to attend the supported employment program at the chosen agency is that they wanted to acquire paid employment. Further analysis of the data shows that becoming employed was an attempt to improve their life situation. Once they started the program, the study-informants realized that although there was no guarantee of acquiring paid employment right away, they all became more prepared to make their life better for themselves.

Central Category

The central category can be considered as the core theme of the research findings and it has the ability to explain almost all emerging categories as a whole (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In other words, the central category makes sense of the research findings. In this study, the central category "*becoming more prepared*" is identified as a theoretical representation of all identified supported employment program outcomes. Through participation in the program, the participants felt that they became more prepared to carry out a process of *making life better for self*. One study-informant explained how this happened:

> I think [this supported employment program] would change [people with disability]. It would give them a direction to go into, put their feet back on the ground, and get back into reality, get back functioning with normal, healthy, regular people, rather than these mental people from [a mental health] Hospital, or these very sick people. [1-755]

As shown in the previous section, the process of making life better for self had been initiated before the study-informants got involved in the supported employment program. Indeed, attending a supported employment program can be considered as a strategy to catalyze the above process.

Central to the idea of "becoming more prepared" is that through participating in the program, the study-informants were more equipped and in a better position to make changes to their lives. *Becoming more prepared* in itself is a process, a process with two distinct phases: beginning phase and ending phase. Although each study-informant had particular circumstances, it is believed that the beginning phase of the process occurred when the study-informants first came to the chosen agency; and the process probably ended when the study-informants no longer benefited from the supported employment program or by the time they acquired employment.

The study-informants are described as "more prepared" because they faced fewer barriers, gained more assistance, and felt more reassured. It is important to note that the program, in itself, would not make any significant changes to their lives. Change was dependent on the availability of jobs, opportunity, and study-informants' determination to take actions and make changes.

The identified different supported employment program outcomes are the components or building blocks of the central category. There are primary and secondary program outcomes. The former are outcomes directly related to the program outputs, and the latter are direct consequences of one primary program outcome "obtaining employment".

Each of the program outcomes can be further classified into one of the following four sub-types based on their properties. The four sub-types are:

1. All/No Outcomes: Outcomes that are either present or absent, and there is no variation in terms of degree or level. One such outcome is *"obtaining employment"*.
2. Cumulative Outcomes: Outcomes that vary in terms of level or degree and can be gradually built up. These outcomes are cumulative because it takes time to acquire them but once acquired they tended to stay with the program participants. Cumulative outcomes are resistant to most identified intervening conditions. One such outcome is *"increased knowledge and skills on employment"*.
3. Fluctuating Outcomes: Outcomes that can be expressed in terms of level or degree but their level fluctuating in either way, and are more susceptible to some other

intervening conditions. One example of fluctuating outcomes is "*becoming reassured*".

4. Fluid Outcomes: Outcomes that are dynamic but cannot be simply expressed as level or degree. A more appropriate way to capture its variation is in terms of quality, in a continuum from "worst" at one end to "best" at the other. Similar to fluctuating outcomes, fluid outcomes are susceptible to other intervening conditions. One of the identified fluid outcomes is "*forming a partnership*".

Components of Central Category - Primary Program Outcomes

Six primary supported employment program outcomes were identified from the data. They were the direct consequences of program output.

1. Having Ability to Perform Effective Job Seeking

Study-informants were able to seek employment effectively because of gaining access to essential job seeking equipment and resources at the chosen agency. They included (a) employment / educational listings, (b) electronic equipment, and (c) transportation. It is an all/no program outcome. Study-informants gained access to these equipment and resources almost all the time at the chosen agency, but not outside the chosen agency. It was study-informants' responsibility to make use of them to make their job seeking effective.

Locating suitable employment / educational opportunities - listings

An important resource available at the chosen agency was job and education listings. Study-informants could look up the job classified section in daily newspaper and updated job listings (either in printed format or through access from the Internet) at the chosen agency. These resources made it easier for study-informants to locate suitable job or educational upgrading opportunities. Some study-informants commented on the economical significance of having access to daily newspapers there:

> And then they have the [news]paper [at the chosen agency], which I can't afford to buy the paper every day because I'm a low income. So I can't buy the paper every day. [4-390]

Although looking up daily newspapers is a good start, most study-informants commented that newspapers are not the only source of job openings.

> Sometimes just the newspaper alone isn't sufficient. [Case managers] have access to other job employments or opportunities other than the newspaper [1-284]... Like, [my case manager] pulled out a book, and there's different jobs that I could apply for, and one was telemarketing in [an non-profit organization]. So I went out there and got the job. [1-299]
>
> They have postings from the EI office up on the walls, Internet job bank. So those things are all available to participants here, as well as calendars for various educational institutions. Like the University calendar, (post-secondary colleges), those sort of institutions, they have those here, so I could always look through those in case I need to go back for more schooling or something like this. [2-6]

In some instances, study-informants spoke of "job leads". Essentially, someone had information about paid employment opportunities and passed it on to other program participants, including study-informants. The study-informants would then decide (with or without input from their case manager) whether to apply or not. It appeared that job leads did not happen very often.

> That job actually came through a lead somebody here had, so it wasn't through the newspaper, it wasn't through the EI listings. Somebody knew somebody else, and they got a lead that there was an opening at this place, and so they referred me, so then me and [my case manager] went down. [2-542]
>
> Actually, it was somebody else in the job search room that found the job. They never got an interview, and I did. [laughs] [5-61]

In addition to job leads at the chosen agency, sometimes they may come from outside the agency. Possible sources were previous employers or personnel at other mental health related services.

> I did have another job, actually, as of [a date], working for [a company]. That was a stage production that was up at a venue here in the city, and I did well at that. That wasn't through [the chosen agency]. See, I've done some other of that sort of stage work before, so these people had my number, this production company. [2-32]

> I was lucky, and my land[lord] knew [someone] that was working at a wood shop. He/She got me on there. So I was pretty lucky. [6-13]

Proper job applications – access to electronic equipment

In the competitive open labour market nowadays, it is expected that all job application letters and resumes are properly typed. As typewriters (either manual or electrical) have become obsolete, computers have become an important tool to produce the documents. Unfortunately study-informants were often unemployed and relied mainly on limited amount of income assistance before they came to the chosen agency. Therefore not many of them could afford a computer or a fax machine. All study-informants found the availability of such essential electronic equipment at the chosen agency made it possible to do proper job applications.

> I do have access, actually, to their resources [at the chosen agency], like the computer, fax machine, printer. So I can also print up copies of my resumé here send them off. I can apply for jobs over the Internet as well. [2-186]

Efficient job applications – transportation arrangement

Transportation was described as another valuable resource at the job seeking stage. Although all program participants should have access to public transportation, it would be quite inefficient and impractical to go to different places dropping off resume for job applications by public transportation. One study-informant expressed his/her gratitude of being driven around by his/her case manager in the city to drop off resumes as this arrangement made the job application process more efficient:

> [My case manager] drove [me] around different parts of the city and dropped off resumés, and that was really, really, *really* helpful. [7-46] … You can't expect a case worker to drive you around all over the place. You don't expect them to have that kind of time. But ideally, they should be doing that, because it's really critical to the clients, as they call them here, that they get that support, because if they don't get it, they're not going to get a job. [7-334]

2. Increased Knowledge and Skills on Employment

Education and skills training are important program output of the supported employment program and were delivered mainly through workshops or seminars. In addition, there was one-week work skills training called "work experience", in which the study-informants had the opportunity to learn a specific job in a real work site. Hands-on skills practice was emphasized. After attending the workshops and seminars, most study-informants reported that they had more skills and knowledge on the current labour market.

> I thought it was very helpful, and good experience to find out so much information about it. It kind of helped me through it… More knowledge about the workforce. [4-34]

This program outcome is cumulative, which means that the more training sessions the study-informants attended and the more they practiced the learned skills, the more knowledge and skills they would build up. Also, once the knowledge and skills were consolidated, they were quite stable, and therefore were not susceptible to the intervening conditions. Data suggest that study-informants had more skills in two areas: job application skills and work-related skills.

Job application skills

Job searching involves a chain of activities, the purpose of which is to convince potential employers to offer job interviews to the job applicants. Successful job searching requires a good understanding of the current labour market and systematic execution of selected strategies. Many of the study-informants had overlooked the importance of those tasks until they came to the chosen agency. Dependent on the type of employment, effective job search can be quite technical and require much planning. Study-informants acquired more knowledge and skills on how to search for job openings and how to prepare job applications and for job interviews.

> Well, I learned a few things about how to check the paper for jobs through them. [6-493]
>
> Well, they have seminars here, I think every day. Sometimes they have meetings in here, and this is where they bring out the various disabled people, and one day we're learning how to fill out properly an application form without making too many errors. They show you an application form with mistakes made and what you should look for. [1-367]

Study-informants learned job interview skills through coaching and rehearsing. In practice sessions, study-informants had the opportunity to rehearse the complete job interview process in a simulated environment. Many study-informants found the hands-on practice very helpful because they believed "practice makes perfect", and some even commented that going through the training makes them feel like they can do an actual interview.

> One was interview skills. That was in two parts. The first part was here in the office, going through printed material that they had. The second part was a mock interview. So the person that was heading the group, he/she arranged a time and an appointment with everyone in the group so that they could come in for an interview sometime, just to see how their interview skills were, how they presented themselves, all that sort of thing. [2-52]

> Even when I did the mock interview, I came here, dressed as I would for an actual interview. So that was quite good. They rate you on that, if you're overdressed, underdressed, whatever. [2-456]

Certain jobs require applicants to have specific kinds of experience and/or work skills. Study-informants' work qualifications were increased through attending some skills training sessions. For example the chosen agency would arrange a certificated training course on customer service; and upon completion, the study-informants could put that qualification on their resume.

> What else did I attend? Oh, also a customer service workshop that they had here. It was called "Service Best," and that was quite good. That was quite good. That was attended actually — not attended, but presented by someone — there was a man who was not working for [the chosen agency], he was contracted out to conduct this seminar. That ran for one day, one full day, and that was quite good, actually. I obtained certification to be able to put in a resumé, so a kind of Service Best program. It was quite good. Tells you a lot about customer service. It was nice to be able to be a part of that and ask questions and stuff like that to a person that was right there in front of you. So even though he wasn't actually a member or an employee of [the chosen agency], it was still very good; it was very informative, very helpful… you know, public relations, customer services is very important. [2-67]

Study-informants were allowed to attend specific work skills training courses offered by other outside organizations. In that case, the chosen agency would cover the cost.

> However, you can develop some skills that will help you in the workplace. If I had been wanting to get a job as a receptionist or something like that, and needed something like PowerPoint, which they don't offer here, they would have paid for a 2-week course somewhere for me to learn how to work PowerPoint. [5-859]
>
> Yes. Or if you wanted to become a forklift operator and the course was 2 weeks, you could get the training to become a forklift operator somewhere else for here. [5-867]

Work-related skills

Some skills training focused on a few basic work skills. For example, there was a seminar on "WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System)", and a workshop on issues related to working alongside colleagues who have a disability.

> [The workshop] was basically telling you how people like to be talked to if they have an interpreter; like, they're deaf, you're supposed to talk to them, not the interpreter. And how quite a few people in wheelchairs consider the wheelchair part of their body. Don't use it to lean on and stuff like that. Things along those lines. Those are the two I still remember. It was over a year ago. [5-925]

Some other skills training components were more related to personal skills that are used at day-to-day work. Examples are "self-esteem, problem-solving skills and communication skills". On the whole, study-informants acknowledged the benefits of attending the work-related skills training sessions within the supported employment program in terms of gaining knowledge about employment and getting to know more about themselves.

> About job stress, and what to do if you don't get along with your boss, or stuff like that. That's good to find out what you can do. And services that are — we find out about services that are available to us like [pause] I don't know. Like, one time, they were teaching us how to read maps, … [3-168]

> What did I get out of [the supported employment program]? It gave me insight — to employers for jobs, for applicants, gave you where your capabilities lie in. [1-307]

One unique work skills training component is called "Work experience program". It could be considered as a work-trial program. Under a mutual agreement between employers and program participants, the program participants would work in a real employment position for one week. The work experience program gave opportunities for both the potential employer and the participant to find out whether that particular employment position was a good match with the participant's skills and ability. Similarly important, program participants gained first-hand real employment experience in a real work site and integrate skills learned at the chosen agency. There was no monetary compensation.

> I did have one job through [the chosen agency] at the time I started. What they did is it was called a "work experience," where I did it for the employer. I worked for a week for free, and the employer could then decide if [he/she] wanted to hire me on or not. If [he/she] didn't, it would be no loss to [him/her]; [he/she]'d have free labour for a week, and if [he/she] did, then I would start working for [him/her]. [2-13]

> I found [the work experience program] very good. It was training on the job, and you get experience. [4-102]

Although some study-informants found the work experience program useful, some others had mixed feelings about it. One study-informant thought that some staff members were over-cautious and going through a work experience program was unnecessary for him/her.

> I feel more confident. In this job, at first, [a staff member at the chosen agency] — [my case manager] was on holidays — talked with [a staff member] at AISH — and they thought they'd put me on an experiment basis on a job and see how I cope, and if I do fine, then they're going to help me find a permanent job. I didn't think that I was that mental that I needed that. So I started with [my case manager], and I started on this job, and I'm doing fine. [1-953]

Some study-informants reported that it might be beneficial to re-attend some of the skills training program. One explained:

> It depends on what [the skill training program] is. Some you don't need to, but some, maybe to help reinforce what you know and stuff like this. Not just reinforce what you know, but to help you, 'cause there's some things you may have missed the first time. [2-997]

Concern of not being able to attend skills training

All study-informants appreciated the opportunities to learn new skills and knowledge from the chosen agency. However, since almost all of the training sessions were held during the usual work hours, the study-informants could no longer attend the skills training sessions once they were employed.

> No, I haven't. I never got a chance to go through all the workshops because I got that job at the woodworking shop. So I wasn't here all that long, really. [6-503]

> Once every three, four, five months, somewhere around then. It's basically going out with [my case manager] for coffee. At first, when I got the job, I was going to the occasional thing in the morning, or something like that, like the occasional thing that interested me, or on my day off. But my work schedule conflicted with the things I was interested in, because everything was offered in the afternoon, and I started work at 2:00, so I couldn't go. [5-718]

3. Forming a Partnership

Once study-informants had registered as supported employment program participants at the chosen agency, a staff member would be assigned as a case manager to them. The case manager is the primary contact person in the program responsible for coordinating the supported employment program for the assigned program participants. A job-seeking plan would be tailored by the case manager in collaboration with the individual study-informants (based on the program participant's background, preferences and needs).

> … what they try to do is they — the first time you come [to the chosen agency], they have — it's like an introduction and an overview of their whole program, what they do and what they're about, and then after that, you're assigned a case manager, and then they will help hammer out a plan with you. [2-666]

The working relationship was sustained even after study-informants acquired paid employment. Once the study-informants became employed, the case manager would provide whatever assistance was necessary and possible to help the study-informants to maintain their employment.

This working relationship between the study-informants and their case manager was depicted as a *partnership*. The nature of partnership described in this study can be characterized by two dimensions, and each dimension is applicable to both the case manager and the program participants. The two dimensions are: (1) types of responsibilities, and (2) level of participation. As described by the study-informants, partnership came with distinct expectations and responsibilities from each party. The nature of partnership between the case managers and the program participants at both the job search stage as well as the employment stage are conceptually illustrated in figure 4-3 and 4-4 respectively.

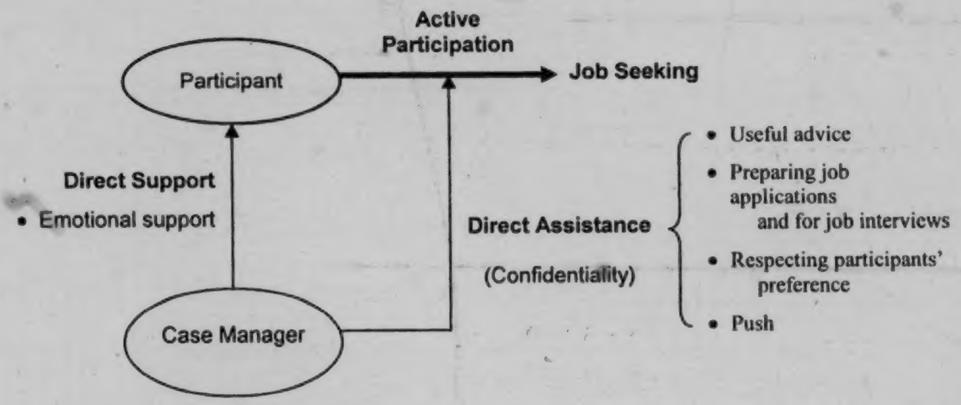

Figure 4-3. Partnership at the job search stage.

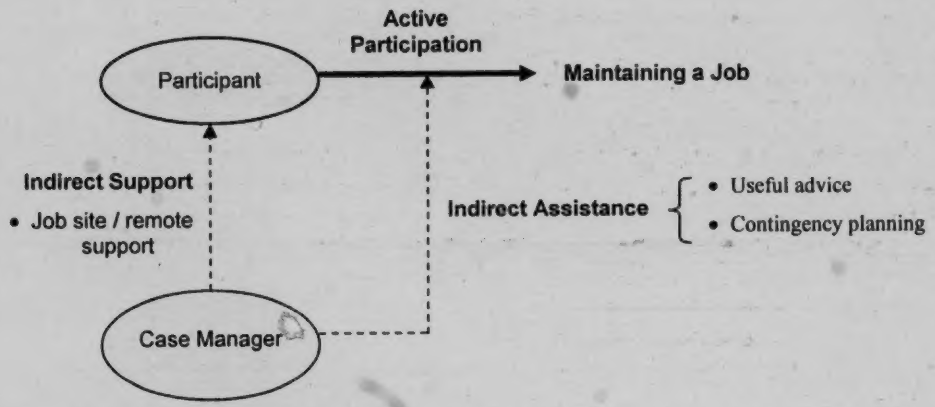

Figure 4-4. Partnership at the employment stage.

From an organizational point of view, case managers are employees of the chosen agency and study-informants are clients being served by the case managers. In this relationship, program participants did not make any direct contribution to the agency; rather, they came to seek support and assistance from the case managers (the providers). The partnership at either the job search or employment stage was more of a one-way provider-receiver relationship. The use of solid arrows in figure 4-3 indicates a more direct approach. The type and level of assistance provided by the case manager was different from one stage to another. During the job search phase case managers were more physically available to provide necessary support and assistance to study-informants. Both parties spent relatively more time together to execute their job search plan (meeting at the chosen agency, dropping off resume, and attending job interviews, etc.). When study-informants entered the employment phase, one significant change occurred. The approach used by the case managers to support the study-informants or assist in problem solving became more indirect (as represented by the dotted arrows in figure 4-4). The program outcome *forming a partnership* is a fluid outcome because the format and dimensions of the partnership were changeable. Three properties were identified in this program outcome and they are (a) assistance, (b) support, and (c) participants' responsibilities.

(a) Assistance

Useful advice - The types of assistance offered by case managers vary at different stages of the program. At the job search stage, study-informants considered their case manager's suggestions on job seeking as useful advice and guidance.

> Also with [my case manager], it's an important point that if I go off and do something by myself, I can speak to [my case manager] about it. I can say, "This is what I've done and how I'm going about this. What do you think?" So I can ask about that; that's a positive point. [2-335]...Because, one, I could be going about things in not a good way, so they sort of help me keep on track. I make changes to my resumé, and they could tell me what they think, if it's a good change, a bad change, or it doesn't —. [2-608]

> It gives me guidance. It's been a while since I applied for work and stuff, so it helps a lot [3-562]

Preparing job applications and for job interviews - Study-informants reported that the actions taken by their case manager in different aspects of job seeking were helpful for study-informants in preparing job applications and for job interviews.

> If you're looking through the want ads and trying to find a job, sometimes [the case managers] assist you when you're looking through the want ads. [6-109]
>
> They help you type up your resumé, they help you fill out application forms, they help you find a suitable job that's related to your field, they help you to go on interviews if you want help. One of the case workers will go with you on an interview with the employer to give you a break, to *give you a chance.* [1-743]
>
> That helps quite a bit, yeah, because I don't have very good computer skills, so [my case manager] just types it in really quickly and boom, it's done. So that does help quite a bit. [7-630]

In addition, case managers would, as part of the coordination effort, gather relevant employment or educationally related information upon request and review the progress with the program participants.

> Like, [my case manager] got me some things on [a specific occupation], because I want to take that course. [He/She]'s good with that; just like that. I just asked him/her a couple of days ago, and [he/she] has it. That's what I mean: they're good with that. They're good. [3-292]

Study-informants were impressed with how their job searches became more organized with the assistance offered by their case manager. In addition, the case manager would "promote the study-informants" if opportunity arose:

> It was more organized with [my case manager]. It wasn't as random as what I was doing. I was just all over the place, just dropping off resumés wherever I saw an ad, and stuff like that. [My case manager] seemed to go more for what they call the hidden job market, type of thing. [My case manager]'d just drive to a specific area and we'd look around each individual business, and if that looked good, drop off a resumé there. [My case manager]'d go in and talk to them, and basically sort of promote me, I guess. [7-261]

In some instances, the case manager would make an effort to attend the study-informant's job interview with the potential employer.

> In this source, [the staff members] help you out. You start, you don't stand alone in this. They give you assistance. In some cases, [my case manager] even takes people to the job interview to give them support, which I think is very good, especially for disabled people. [1-277]

Other than giving study-informants support, the available data do not detail what the case manager would do in the job interview; however, it seemed that the case manager would advocate for the study-informants. Also, it is clear that the case manager would not be present in all study-informants' job interviews, depending on whether the case manager had appointments with others during the time of job interview.

> There wasn't time. I got the interview — I found out about the interview when I got home at 4 o'clock, and I went to the interview at 2 o'clock the next day. [My case manager] was already booked up that morning that day. There wasn't time for anything. [5-65]

Generally speaking a job interview usually involves only the interviewer(s) (representatives from the company) and the job applicant. In this case, study-informants were the actual job applicants. The presence of their case manager in study-informants' job interview made it atypical. However, additional advocacy from the case manager was welcomed by most study-informants because it sometimes made things a bit easier.

> Interviewer: How do you feel having [your case manager present] in the job interview?
>
> Informant: I felt pretty good. [4-494]

Another study-informant gave more details why having the case manager in job interview was helpful:

> I think at that time — that was probably about a year ago — and I think at that time, I wasn't really [pause] that — at the top of my game, you know, so it was nice that [my case manager] was able to come and [be present in job interview]. [2-539]

__Respecting participants' preference__ - While the case managers assisted study-informants in different aspects of job seeking, study-informants' preference was respected most of the time. Typically at the chosen agency the case managers would not make decisions for the participants; rather they would try to understand and show respect for the participant's preferences, and work with those preferences. One example is that study-informants were sincerely encouraged to select the kind of employment they would like to pursue:

> Well, it's sitting down with one-to-one, and [my case manager] is asking questions: what kind of job that I would like to have, and what I would be interested in. [4-366]
>
> What I mean is I was at first looking for a [waitering/waitressing] job, but I decided to apply for market research firm, took the job because it actually paid better than a [waitering/waitressing] job, and they were supportive of me in my decision to apply to a market research firm. [5-371]

Case managers also respected study-informants' choices in terms of what skills training program to participate in. In addition, the case manager would take study-informants' readiness into consideration.

> It's ready, there for you; if you want to get some help, you can get help; if you don't want to bother, just work on your own, that's fine, too. And they don't force you to attend programs that you don't want to. [2-381]

Another study-informant was stressed by being asked to perform job searches because he/she did not feel she was ready. Eventually, he/she brought this matter to his/her case manager's attention and his/her case manager was fine with that.

> Then I finally told them [I was not ready to look for job], and the [case manager] said, "No problem." So I was scared! I'm, like, I'm not ready to work, but I have to call people and ask if they're hiring, and go give them my resumé. [3-24]

Push - However, if study-informants showed signs of not making full effort at the chosen agency, their case manager would further clarify the expectations with them. This kind of action was described by some study-informants as "*push*".

> [The case managers] would *pus*h somebody who was reading the regular part of the paper and not reading the job search part. They would basically probably ask them, "Do you really want to be working?" [5-892]

> When I came here to look for work, they really *push* you. They'll be sure that, while you're here, you've done a lot of work seeking for this job. Like, you've got to apply through the newspaper, through the postings on the bulletin board with your case worker. So they don't expect you to do just one, two, or three resumés or faxes, they want you to do a whole bunch. In a week's time, they want that sheet filled up that you've tried these different employers to get work. So they really *push* you along; ... [1-842]

A study-informant recalled how he/she reacted to the *push* during the job search stage:

> Informant: Some of the [staff members] were quite pushy, and they want you to look in the newspaper every day. It's kind of, like, "I *looked* at newspaper. Give me a break."
>
> Interviewer: How do you find when they push you looking at newspapers?
>
> Informant: *It's annoying*. They kind of — I mean, you've done what you're supposed to do for the day. There's not much more I can do. What am I supposed to do? [7-18]

But later on, the same study-informant acknowledged that he/she had not made full effort; his/her perspective changed and he/she perceived the push as a positive encouragement and found it helpful.

Informant: … [my case manager] pushed me a little bit. I mean, [he/she] noticed I wasn't — [he/she] noticed I didn't like going out and doing the — going out to the different places and meeting all these different people all the time. I wasn't too crazy about it, but [he/she] sort of encouraged me to just go out there and try, I guess….

Interviewer: How do you find that push?

Informant: It helps. Some people might not like it, but it does help. [7-614]

Confidentiality - For the most part, receiving assistance did not jeopardize the privacy of study-informants. Study-informants' background history was disclosed to third party in a discrete fashion. It seemed that case managers would reveal as little study-informants' medical information as possible to the potential employers.

> [My case manager] doesn't disclose [my background information] at all. The only thing [my case manager] discloses is that [the chosen agency] is an organization that helps people with disabilities, so [the potential employers] may be wondering what is wrong with this person. [2-307]… [My case manager] hasn't disclosed anything about [mental health hospital] or any sort of mental illness or anything like that. What [my case manager] has disclosed is that I'm a sort of a participant over here, but then that's all. [2-312]

On some occasions, the case manager was open and honest with the potential employers regarding the fact that the study-informant had an illness. The criteria for increased disclosure were not known from the available data.

> [My case manager] told [the potential employers] that I had an illness, type of thing, and that's one of the things [my case manager] was upfront about. And [he/she] tried to market me, say I'm a good worker, stuff like that, da-ta-da. But basically, [he/she] was upfront about the illness stuff. That's mainly what [he/she] talked about was that. [7-718]

Contingency plan - Assistance could be in a more proactive manner. One such example is making a contingency plan for foreseeable problems in the future. This issue was brought up by one study-informant and the case manager was willing to make a special plan in collaboration with the study-informant in order to ease the study-informant's mind.

> But if I was to get sick, [my case manager] would become involved with my employer so I would have my job when I was well enough to work again. That's what I talked to [my case manager] about this Wednesday. Like, what would happen if I'm going into the hospital, I won't be able to work for 2 months? [My case manager] told me, "Then what you do is you phone your employer immediately, set up an appointment, and I'll go with you. I can either come with you or just drive you there, whatever." [5-515]

(b) Support

Job site follow-up - Another key feature of partnership was the additional support provided to study-informants at the job site. It is based on the belief that people with a disability will have a better chance of maintaining their employment if additional support and on-the-job training are provided by their case manager. Once the study-informants were employed, they were encouraged to phone their case manger for assistance if "they were having any problems at work". Also the case managers would visit the study-informants at the job site to assess study-informants' work performance and to provide whatever support or assistance was necessary and possibly helping the study-informants to maintain their job. That kind of arrangement was initiated by the case manager and approved by both the study-informants as well as their employer.

> … the case manager, [he/she] came down, saw how I was doing over there; … trying to give me a hand on the job, and sort of see how I'm doing. [He/She] talked to me, [he/she] talked to the employer there to see their experience of how I was doing. So that was quite good. [2-23]

In some cases, it proved to be challenging for the case managers to visit study-informants at the job site. One such barrier was that it was just not preferable for the case managers to be physically present at the job site. Nevertheless, not being visited by their case manager did not deter study-informants from keeping contact with their case manager for support and problem solving. Contacts between case managers and study-informants still occurred outside work hours and away from the job site.

> Then after I got the job, [my case manager] — I'd been going out for coffee with [my case manager] once in a while — and [he/she] didn't come do training on the job with me or anything like that, because where I'm working, they trained you. [5-26]… [My employer] wouldn't have been too open to having [my case manager] in any of their things due to confidentiality reasons. So that wasn't even an option with where I'm working. [5-31]

Another study-informant reported how a perceived work problem was resolved with the assistance offered by his/her case manager:

> Well [pause] there was one incident with my boss that [he/she] was getting picky. Like, I would eat roast beef sandwiches every day, and [he/she] seemed like [he/she] — maybe [he/she] was joking, but [he/she] said I should eat something else instead of roast beef every day, and I took that offensive… I just told [my case manager] about it. [My case manager] just said that [he/she] probably was just being nice about it, and maybe wanted to give you a different menu instead of eating the same meal every day. So I was quite pleased with that. [4-156]

Emotional support - Study-informants frequently mentioned the emotional support they received from their case manager. For the most part, what the study-informants appreciated was that their case manager would provide the support at the right time and "it's something to fall back on". It is even more significant during the job search stage, when the study-informants were from time to time confronted with uncertainty and nerve-wracking moments.

> When I first came here, I was really down because of my illness, and I wasn't myself. [My case manager] was trying to make me feel better and cheer me up. I thought that was really nice of [him/her] to help me out like that. [6-359]

> … [my case manager]'s good support if I feel nervous. Like, one time when I was going to drop off a resumé for the first time in a couple of years, [my case manager] came with me to the mall and gave me support. Then I dropped off the resumé and [my case manager] met me, and then we talked, and that was really cool. That was really cool… It made a big difference, because I was nervous, and I probably would have started running my thoughts, so I had someone to talk to. That was really nice. I never heard of people doing that, but that's what [my case manager] did, so that was really nice. [3-507]

(c) Participants' responsibilities

Achieving the primary supported employment program objective (to help program participants to obtain paid employment) required not only the assistance and support from the case managers, but also the active participation and determination from the program participants. Program participants were expected to play leading roles in this participant-case manager partnership. Even for skills training sessions, case managers would leave it up to the program participants to sign up and follow through for whatever skills training sessions the participants thought would be useful:

> But every month — see, this is a schedule here for January 2002. This is all the programs and the modules and that, that they have going on right for this month. I've seen that every month. So you can sign up for the ones that you're interested in that you think would help. Of course, then you have to follow through. That's okay, that's good. [2-385]

One consistent finding is that case managers would not directly obtain employment for study-informants. The study-informants needed to take the initiative to "do most of the work". The case managers expected the study-informants to come to the chosen agency "on time" and to work really hard on locating job openings and sending out job applications.

> They also have something here, it's called "self-directed activities." Basically, you come in — you have to tell them when you come in, and there's somebody that's running the program — not the case manager, but somebody else. You can go through the EI list, go to the Internet, go over to the bulletin board, do whatever you feel would be helpful in your job search, and there's somebody there to assist you if you need help. [2-92] …The main onus is on me to do the work, to use the resources. But the resources are here; it's just up to me to use them. So that's good. [2-202]

Study-informants' active participation was even more significant in the employment stage. Although study-informants acknowledged that assistance and support from the case manager were vital, they realized that case managers could only have very limited involvement in program participants' day-to-day employment. For the most part, providing direct assistance to the program participants by the case managers was no longer feasible. Study-informants explained that they had to take on most responsibility to maintain their employment. This idea was clearly evident from those employed study-informants.

> … I'm keeping my job on my own. [My case manager]'s never been involved with my employer at all, really. [5-511]

> That kind of stage work, it requires — it's physical work, it's hard work, so it requires that I be in minimum physical shape to be able to do that properly. So that's something I have to handle on my own, it's not through [the agency] here. [2-169]

Other characteristics of partnership

Two additional characteristics of *forming a partnership* were also identified. They are: (1) being perceived as incompetent, and (2) partnership termination.

Being perceived as incompetent - Study-informants for the most part appreciated the necessity of receiving assistance from their case manager in job seeking. One particular study-informant, on the other hand, expressed concerns of being perceived as incompetent when his/her case manager was directly involved in some aspects of the job seeking process, which most people without disability would do on their own. For example, data indicate that case managers would sometimes contact potential employers on behalf of study-informants to inquire about potential job openings. That arrangement created concerns of being viewed as "behind":

> The only thing I worry about, [my case manager], when somebody calls on your behalf to an employer, the employer — I think in *my* mind — wonders, "Why is this person calling on their behalf? Can't the person call for themself?" So it sort of sets you apart in that way; it sets you apart, and not in a good way. So that's [pause] not a good thing, 'cause you don't want them thinking you're somehow behind or not able to conduct your affairs yourself. [2-118]

A similar concern also occurred at the job interview. The same study-informant was ambivalent about having his/her case manager in his/her job interview. He/She was concerned that the potential employer might perceive such an arrangement as accommodation for incompetent job applicants, even though he/she eventually had the offer of a one-week work experience. In retrospect, the respondent was convinced that the advantage of having the case manager in the interview at that time outweighed the disadvantage:

> But the only thing again that I think is a little bit bad, because when you're sitting there with somebody from an agency at an interview, the employer is wondering, I think, "Why is this person here with them?" Normally, a person would be there on their own. Do you know what I mean?… Ideally, it would be best if I was there alone with the employer. That would be the ideal, but sometimes, it is helpful because I'm not at my best, and she can point out things and speak to things that the employer asks. So I mean it's nice that [he/she]'s willing to do that, but it's not good in that it makes me look a little bad, you know. [2-512]

The work experience program was supposed to be an opportunity for the program participants to learn variable work skills and to prove to the potential employer that they could handle the job. However the following concerns arose:

> [The work experience]'s a nice thing, because it gives the employer an opportunity to see how you work without having to pay you; that's nice. But the employers kind of look at it — you know what I mean; some employers see it in a very bad light, because they say, "Who wants to work for free?" They don't expect you to work for free. They wonder… so it casts you in sort of a negative light, so I think that is a downside to it. [2-586]

Partnership termination - Some study-informants, who planned to look for another employment in the future, continued to maintain occasional contact with their case manager after they obtained their first employment. Others preferred to utilize the supported employment program for job seeking only. For the latter group, once they were employed they preferred to discontinue the partnership with their case manager:

> [I am] Not really [keeping contact with my case manager], but [my case manager] has been helpful to me. He/She has been really helpful. [6-364]

4. Becoming Reassured

Not all study-informants had obtained paid employment through participating in the supported employment program. Some had acquired a job but later on terminated it for various reasons. Whether employed or not, all of the study-informants seemed to have a sense of reassurance that they would eventually obtain paid employment through this supported employment program.

This reassurance originated and was reinforced by: (1) confidence in their case manager; and (2) from others' success. Based on the available data, it appeared that both causal conditions were required for the study-informants to gain the sense of reassurance. This program outcome is a fluctuating type. This means that the level of reassurance can vary depending on at least the above two named causal conditions. The concept is shown in figure 4-5 below:

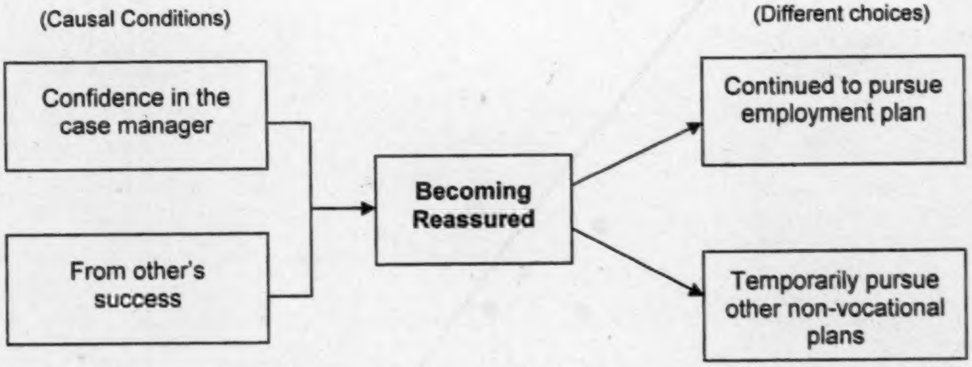
(Causal Conditions)
(Different choices)
Confidence in the case manager
From other's success
Becoming Reassured
Continued to pursue employment plan
Temporarily pursue other non-vocational plans

Figure 4-5. Causal conditions and consequences of the program outcome *becoming reassured* at the job search stage.

Confidence in the case manager

All study-informants trusted their case manager's ability and commitment to assist in job seeking. That kind of confidence was developed mostly from study-informants' own observations and day-to-day experience with their case manager.

> [My case manager]'s a professional looking for work, I'm not. I'm not a professional job-seeker. I guess I am, but [my case manager] knows what [he/she]'s — [he/she]'s been doing it for years and years, and [he/she] seems to know what [he/she]'s doing, and [he/she] seems to know where not to apply and where to apply, and I don't. I'm just going there randomly and just guessing. I have no idea what the workplace is like, and [he/she] knows what the workplace and stuff is like in a lot of places. [He/She] seems to, anyways. [He/She]'s quite knowledgeable. [7-55]

> I mean, [my case manager]'s got other clients, there are time constraints on [my case manager] — but other questions that I have, I feel confident that [my case manager] can sit down with me and be helpful answering them. [2-256]

One study-informant specifically talked about how knowledgeable he/she thought his/her case manager was in preparing an effective resume.

> Okay, functional resumé. In that, you don't really have a chronological listing of the jobs that you've had. It more tells what skills you have and what you're able to do. So it's different in format. And [my case manager] would help, because [my case manager] know[s] what is the best format for that. [2-617]

When study-informants consistently saw case managers working very hard to assist program participants in job seeking, the study-informants realized that whenever they themselves are ready to have paid employment, their case manager would do whatever they could to help.

> … I'd have a better chance of finding a job, I think, through [this agency], if I came back." [6-374] … one of the staff members told me that if you ever need help finding a job, just come back here, and we'll help you out. [6-413]

From others' success

Data seem to suggest that the condition "obtaining employment" through the supported employment program is an essential causal condition for the outcome "becoming reassured", although one did not necessarily need to obtain employment to experience *reassurance*. Study-informants noticed that from time-to-time other program participants successfully obtained paid employment. That observation was somehow sufficient to reinforce the idea that it is possible for disabled individuals (including the study-informants themselves) to obtain paid employment.

> No, I have nothing to say — nothing but good about it. And I've heard that lots of people have gotten jobs through this [chosen agency], people helping disabled people go back to work. [1-146]

Consequences of becoming reassured

Because of this reassurance, all study-informants believed that they could successfully obtain employment through this supported employment program as long as they wanted to. Some study-informants continued to pursue vocational goals; others would temporarily put off their vocational plan and focus on qualification upgrading hoping that they could have a brighter career in the future. One study-informant decided to focus on education for the time being, because he/she had confidence that he/she would get a job if he/she came back to the chosen agency.

> I don't even know how long I was coming here before I decided that I was just going to do school, concentrate on school. But I know that when I come back, I'll get a job. I know that, 'cause they're good at that, and they *will* get you a job. [3-151]

5. Achieving a Better Self-image

Study-informants reported a positive change in how they viewed themselves since they had started attending the supported employment program. The changes can be grouped under a category named *achieving a better self-image*.

Data suggest that there were four perceived program outcomes attributed to *achieving a better self-image*: (1) Increase sense of self-worth; (2) being productive; (3) gaining confidence; and (4) not being alone. The relationship of these outcomes to *achieving a better self-image* is illustrated in figure 4-6.

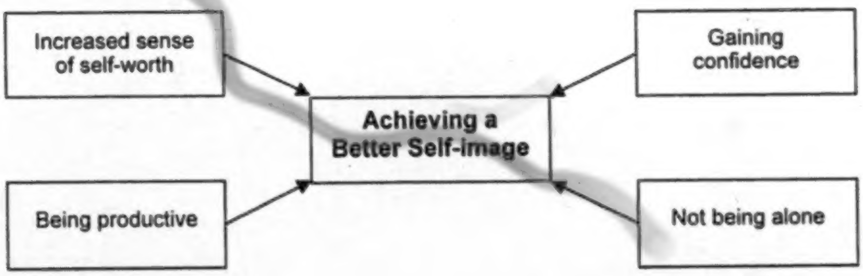

Figure 4-6. Contributing factors of the program outcome *achieving a better self-image*.

Each of the four outcomes operated individually. They altered study-informants' perception of themselves and subsequently influenced the quality of self-image. The program outcome *achieving a better self-image* is a fluid program outcome.

Increase sense of self-worth

Having a case manager to assist in job seeking was a unique experience to most study-informants. The study-informants appreciated the way they were being treated by their case manager as well as by other staff members in the chosen agency. They felt the staff members cared about program participants.

> [My case manager] did help me out when I needed it, type of thing. And [he/she] made suggestions about going on social assistance and stuff like that, so [he/she]'s concerned about me. At least, [he/she] *shows* concern. [7-178] ...It's nice to have *sombody* care about you! [laughs] That's about it. [7-186]

Staff members' dedication not only made the whole job search process more efficient than that of study-informants working alone, it also made study-informants feel important, and consequently increased their self-worth.

Interviewer:	You said that some workers are dedicated to you. How does it really make you feel when people dedicated working for you?
Respondent:	Makes me feel important.
Interviewer:	Important?
Respondent:	Yeah. Important that I'm worth something, that people would take the time. It's just like when I feel down, I'll call a friend and they'll make me feel better. 'Cause sometimes you feel alone, and you feel like you're just worthless, and it's good to know that people care. It's hard to explain when you have depression, and you have thoughts that you think are real, but they're not real, they're paranoia or whatever. [3-472]

As discussed in the previous section (Contextual Conditions), study-informants attended the supported employment program mainly because they experienced difficulty in acquiring employment secondary to their mental illness. Having such a diagnosis was acceptable at the chosen agency and did not lead others to treat them as second-class labourers. Frequently, study-informants commented that they were treated as if they were capable individuals.

> See, the thing that I think is important here is that the people in this program, [the staff members] haven't dubbed me as somebody with a mental illness or a disability. They treat me as another competent person coming in that they can assist. That's really helpful; that's really nice. I think that's the one thing I appreciate the most… [2-949]
>
> The [case managers] weren't trying to put me into menial labour. The job I have is classified as unskilled, but they weren't trying to get me a job hanging clothes on hangers or something like that because of my diagnosis. They didn't view me as totally "I can't hold a regular job because I have a psychiatric diagnosis." [5-825]

Being productive

Study-informants emphasized the need to be productive. One element of *being productive* is the study-informants' subjective experience of such. Although coming to the supported employment program is not equivalent to being employed, nor do study-informants receive any monetary incentive while looking for job at the chosen agency, most study-informants (whether they were employed or not) consistently expressed the opinion that attending the supported employment program made them feel productive.

> Well, you know, it's nice to know that even if I'm not working, that I can come [the chosen agency] and at least I'm doing something during the day. [2-568]
>
> … [the program] is good. It's also good to get out every day and get you in the mode to work, if you have something to do. [3-14]

On the other hand, study-informants did not perceive engaging in activities at day programs (e.g. playing cards) as productive.

> Yes, structures the day and give me something to do during the day, versus going to a day program that you sit around all day and play cards. [5-135]

Gaining confidence

Some study-informants affirmed that they gained more confidence in acquiring employment through skills training and practicing at the chosen agency:

> Because it sort of registered in my mind with the program to feel confident. I got all the materials from the workshop, so I would go through my information and read it, so it's helped me through it. I don't feel insecure about myself any more. [4-516]
>
> I suppose it's different for every person, but I guess [the supported employment program] would build your confidence a little bit, type of thing. That'd be about it… Confidence on going out there and looking for work and stuff like that. [7-600]

Not being alone

One important impact of being in the program on study-informants was that they noticed there were many other people with disabilities who had been trying very hard to acquire employment without any guarantee of success. This realization prompted the study-informants to learn that they were not alone in struggling with their disabilities.

> I find other people looking for work, some of them the same field as me, others in different fields who have had disabilities, either a nervous breakdown, or some mental or physical illness. So we're all sort of limited in our capacities. We get together, and we sort of, I guess, support one another… Psychological support. Confidence, psychological support. You feel like you're not the only one in the world coping with a handicap. [1-389]

> I learned that I'm not the only one in the same boat. Everybody's in the same boat. They're all trying to look for work. We all have one goal ["to find work"] in mind. You know. [6-494]

6. Obtaining Employment

It is no surprise that *obtaining employment* (the primary objective of the support employment program) was one of the identified primary program outcomes. *Obtaining employment* is a critical juncture leading to secondary program outcomes, which will be discussed in the following section. This category is an all/no outcome because by the time this study was conducted, not all program participants had successfully obtained employment from the program. Study-informants either had employment or did not have employment. There is no in between. Data suggest that neither the case managers nor the study-informants were able to predict how soon the study-informants would obtain employment. It was felt that the open labour market was unpredictable.

> You don't know what to expect in this job market, it's so unpredictable. You don't know when you're going to get a job. Some people are — I think they told us here the average job seeker looks for six months or something. So that was two months; I was happy. [7-693]

Study-informants were not expected to complete all skills training programs available at the chosen agency. They could start working as soon as they obtained employment. Nevertheless, some study-informants successfully obtained employment soon after they had started attending the supported employment program.

> Yes. I got a job a heck of a lot faster than I thought I would. I did not expect to be employed. Five days or 10 days after I started the program, I was starting my job. Didn't expect that. [5-809]

Study-informants had different levels of satisfaction with the outcome *obtaining employment*. Some study-informants were grateful that they had obtained employments from the chosen agency and they hoped that it would continue:

> Getting a job was very helpful, and I would like to do it again, to get another job. [4-70]

Another study-informant, although seeing employment as an important part of life, did not show very high regard for the first employment obtained through the program because he/she considered the employment to be a low level job:

> I like [the current job] a lot better than cleaning houses. I did [cleaning houses] because of my mental condition. [1-24]… It's a nothing job after — I used to be a Steno 3, and now I'm doing a very low level job. That's about it. [1-99]… but it's a job that I don't have to worry about. [1-929]

Components of Central Category - Secondary Program Outcomes

Study-informants clearly articulated a different set of outcomes, which are direct consequences of being employed. This set of outcomes was named *secondary program outcomes* in this study. The secondary program outcomes were primarily reported by employed study-informants based on their lived experiences. For those who were not employed at the time this study was conducted, they did not experience these outcomes but were able to recall how they had benefited from having paid employment in the past. Those reported benefits are essentially similar to the secondary program outcomes described by the employed study-informants.

Although there are a number of local community mental health day programs offering structured social activities as an alternative to employment, many study-informants found that those programs were unable to meet their needs and they were not motivated to attend those programs. Being employed is a unique experience, which provided outcomes that generally would not be offered by non-vocational community day programs. Study-informants expressed opinions regarding employment bringing a sense of joy.

> Since I got a job, I've been happier… I have — find it easier to get up in the morning, get out of the house in the morning, even on days that I don't work. [pause] That basically works… My parents have noticed that, too. I'm a lot more fun to be around. I don't know what they mean by that, really. [both laugh] [5-338]

> But I have a job now, so I'm happy. I'm happy. I'm working during the day. I was really happy when I got that job. [6-81]

From the available data, three secondary program outcomes that are associated with being employed were identified: (1) Confirming own competence and potential, (2) building a life, and (3) refining work related skills and knowledge. They are further discussed in the following section.

1. Confirming Own Competence and Potential

Engaging in paid employment allowed study-informants to utilize some of their skills and potential. But being employed was not sufficient in itself to confirm their competence or potential. Data suggest that the confirmation occurred only when study-informants performed adequately in their employment. One study-informant described that it was not affirmative when he/she obtained his/her first employment through the supported employment program and during that time he/she felt like "the employer was taking a chance of hiring somebody with mental or physical disabilities". It was after he/she proved to him/herself as well as his/her employer that he/she could handle the employment well when he/she was convinced he/she was a capable worker:

> [Having present job] built up my confidence. It's a job that I don't worry about. I did at first worry about it. I was scared they'd fired me or something, knowing I'm on [disability income assistance] and on medication. But I *proved* that I could do the job. I do a good job, and I do it quite fast in comparison to the other staff members, who, most of them, they also have handicap problems, not real severe, but enough that they can't function in a full-time responsible job. [1-450]

Being employed provided a sense of "functioning" and "contributing" to study-informants.

> You're doing something. You're paying taxes and you're helping society in general function, type of thing, and that's important. If everybody was on social assistance, [laughs] society wouldn't function too well. [7-583]

> I feel a lot better about myself because [pause] how can I put it? Because I'm being productive, I'm not just doing something just to do it. Like, I'm actually contributing. [5-663]

Through employment, study-informants became more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses.

> That I have? Well, that I am physically slow. I've tried different trades and stuff like that, and in most trades, if you're not quick, you don't make money, so —. I tried the cooking thing, and they told me that I was slow there. Tried the carpet-laying; they told me I was slow there. Tried carpentry. I just don't have the capability or whatever to be a carpenter. I'm just — I don't read blueprints or I can't visualize stuff. I just don't have the coordination to be a carpenter or an electrician or a pipefitter. So I've tried different things. You know, I guess [pause] I don't know. I don't know! It was good, yeah. [7-464] … I know I'm dependable. I mean, I'm there every day and I try everything. I do my best, and if they don't like it, that's all I can do is hope and pray that they don't fire me. [7-479]

2. Building a Life

As mentioned in the previous section, study-informants were generally dissatisfied with certain aspects of their lives (consequences of having mental problem and unemployment) and they were determined to make changes to their lives, a process of *building a life*. The process was catalyzed when study-informants acquired and started new employment. Being employed further enhanced program participants' confidence, sense of well-being and productivity. One study-informant described how being employed helped him/her to earn more confidence from others:

> Yes, [having a job] gives me more confidence to intercommunicate with other people. Then I find my handicap isn't maybe quite as bad as some other people have. I figured that I could pull my socks up. You sometimes get into a low, a depression, and you get out of it, and you function in the world, you've got a job, you do it well, you feel confident. People then react to you and treat you with confidence." [1-464]… people have more respect for you, they treat you like a human person. [1-480]

As reported by the study-informants, the process of building a life involved different areas: (a) social contact, (b) new possibilities, and (c) employment earnings.

Social contact

Most study-informants expressed a desire to have a social life, in which they could have more contact with other people. Some study-informants stated that having social contact was a vital step in improving their mental health.

Interviewer:	How come having a job is so important to you?
Informant:	Because you need — it helps to have extra money, it gives you confidence, it gets you a *social life*, like, interacting with people. [3-408]… People with mental illness need to interact with people. It's not good for them to be by themselves, which is what I want to do most of the time, and I have to force myself to get out. [3-440]

Most study-informants expressed a desire to have more social contact with people without disability and that being employed in the open labour market provided such opportunity. The following quotes provide some insight on some social consequences of obtaining employment, especially having more social contact with people without disability.

> I feel better. I'm interacting with more healthy, normal people. [1-23]
>
> I know more people. I know people that I didn't meet because I have mental health disorder. That was basically who I knew, other than the few friends that I still had contact with from university. The only people I knew when I was going to [another mental health program] were because I had a mental health disability, and quite a few of the people there were quite sick, and they didn't do anything. [5-142]…
>
> I meet people that want to do things, like will want to go out for a meal — have the money also to go out for a meal — which didn't happen when I was at [another day program]. Also, meet different people, people that I have more in common with. [5-157]… And [pause] I have a lot more friends since I've been working, which is important to me." [5-171].

New possibilities

The positive experience of being able to maintain employment encouraged some study-informants to start making a concrete plan that they could have only dreamed of in the past, even though they admitted that it was a "one step at a time" process.

> I thought eventually, I'd venture out into something more responsible, but meanwhile, I'd take [the present employment] so I could get some current work experience. I'd like to be there till springtime or till Easter, and then from there, I'd like to venture into something with more responsibility. [1-224]… So I just continue on. But I'd like something with a little bit more intellect — more intellect required. [1-458]

New possibilities were not restricted to the vocational area. One study-informant explained that his/her options of living arrangements were expanded simply because he/she could hold a job.

> I'm allowed to live independently. I'm on the waiting list for apartments, which — my nurse at mental health services thinks I'm suitable for independent living because I'm working. Which is good, because I don't really want to be living in an approved home for the rest of my life like I am now. [5-229]… I actually went in and asked [my nurse at mental health service] — made an appointment downtown to ask [his/her], and that was the main criteria [he/she] gave. That was the reason why. [He/She] said, "You're working, you can live independently," was basically what [he/she] said. [5-237]
>
> I go shopping downtown, I look around. I've got my visual horoscope; the horizon is opened up, more opened than staying at home and brooding about things that have happened to you. [1-472]

One study-informant thought that he/she could *build* his/her life again because he/she was employed.

> I think from there, I'm trying to set up my life now. Now I got a part-time job, now I'd like to be a member on a couple of committees dealing with mental health. My religion, and my going out with [my friends] — I go out socializing, I go dancing. I don't have a [boyfriend/girlfriend], but now that my muddle is cleared up, I found a job, now I want to find a [boyfriend/girlfriend]. [laughs] [1-499]

In addition, having employment helped study-informants to focus on functioning rather than on their disability.

> Then you're back into the workforce, your mind is being occupied with other things, other than your own handicap. [1-166]

Employment earnings

Study-informants also gave a rather interesting perspective on employment earnings. No study-informant asserted that money would be the only reason for wanting paid employment. For the study-informants who were employed during the time of study, none of them reported that earned income was their major resource of basic living (food, shelter, etc.). It appeared that they all enjoyed having extra money to spend on enriching their lives.

> That's what I'm planning on spending my money on. I've been asked to go on a trip. We're going to start planning it in 2005, and probably go in 2007 with [Boy Scout/Girl Guides]. [5-279]...Yes, it helps me to be able to do that. Also have enough money to buy clothes when I want to buy clothes — not the clothes that I need, but clothes that I want! [laughs] Be able to afford to go out for lunch a little bit more frequently, or out for supper. Because just on [disability income assistance], I wouldn't be able to afford to go out as much as I do! That type of thing. Don't need basically any help from my parents. I did need a little bit when I was just on [disability income assistance]. I couldn't afford to go visit them as much as they wanted me to come and I wanted to go. Couldn't afford to do that. The money is nice, but that's not the main reason why I'm working. [5-296]

> It would just give me extra money to buy what I need for art supplies. It would help me out. [4-192]

One study-informant could pay his/her bills by income assistance, but he/she preferred to pay his/her bills by employment earnings so that he/she could see him/herself as *self-sufficient*. In his/her opinion, being self-sufficient meant he/she could afford to do things that most "normal people" would regularly do without problem:

> You can go out and do things: go to dinner and go to movies and you can basically do what normal people do, I guess. You can survive and pay your bills, and have a bit of confidence in saying that you're self-supporting yourself and stuff like that, instead of living on [income] assistance, which is very — I think it's very degrading. [7-550]

3. Refining Work-related Skills and Knowledge

Once study-informants became employed, they started to acquire real work skills and continued to gain valuable information about the current workplace, which would be useful for future job searching and new employment.

> I gained a lot of experience [from my paid job]… Just experience working with the public. I would clean tables at lunch hour; clean the tables and take the dirty dishes off the tables when the customers would finish eating. [4-135]

> Oh, yeah. Any experience [gained from a paid job] that you have, whether it's negative or positive, is valuable. It prepares you for your next job. [7-455]

> Although I do know if I was going to go apply doing the same type of work, if I got laid off for some reason, I wouldn't bother with the [news]paper. I would just go walk around downtown and go into buildings, because most firms don't advertise in the paper… It's basically word of mouth, as far as I know… [5-447] Because where I'm working doesn't advertise in the [news]paper any more. They advertise on the bus, and that's about it." [5-474]

Intervening Conditions

Intervening conditions are events or circumstances that influence the supported employment program outcomes. The influences can be reinforcing or counteracting. To put this into perspective, in this study the central category describes what is happening to the study-informants overall; intervening conditions explain why they are happening in different degrees for different study-informants. In other words, the intervening conditions account for the variation of program outcomes. All intervening conditions are identified and grouped with reference to the Person-environment-occupation (PEO) model (Law et al., 1996). The model emphasizes the complex dynamic relationships (transaction) between person, occupations, and environments. It also highlights how the interactions influence an individual's overall occupational performance. Details of the PEO Model are described in recent literature (Law et al.; Strong et al., 1999). All identified intervening conditions are illustrated in figure 4-7.

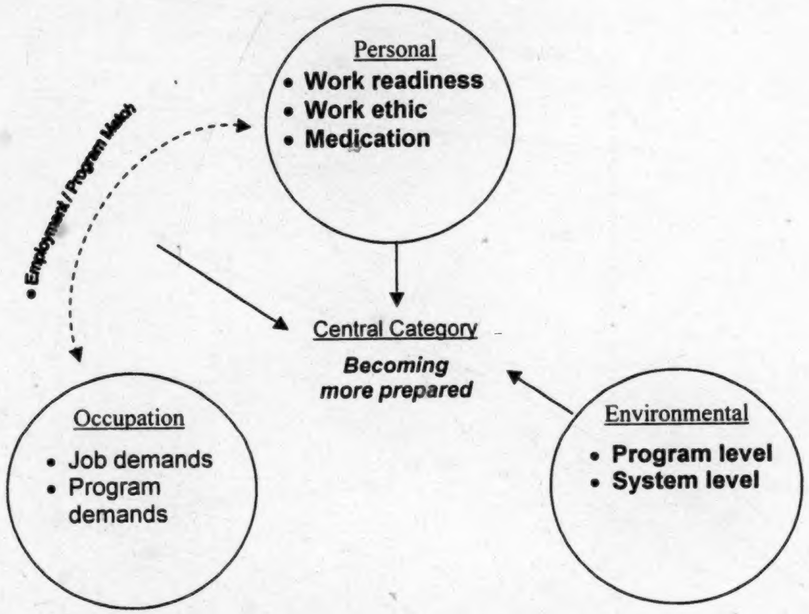

Figure 4-7. Identified intervening conditions of the central category.

Intervening Conditions - Personal

Personal intervening conditions are specific personal attributes of study-informants that impact on supported employment program outcomes. Three personal intervening conditions were identified: work readiness, work ethic, and taking medication.

Work readiness

Work readiness is the degree to which an individual is ready (physically and psychologically) to be engaging in work-related activities. Data suggest that the degree of work readiness influenced study-informants' overall experience in the supported employment program. Most study-informants got to know their actual level of work readiness through participating in the supported employment program or paid employment, particularly when they were confronted with the demands of job searching or following up on an employment opportunity. Stress was a common response if study-informants had a relatively low level of readiness but were pushed to perform in the program.

> You have to call people and ask if they're hiring. At first, when I came into this program, I was caught off-guard, 'cause I didn't want to work right away, I wanted to prepare to work, and I had to do that, but I didn't tell them, and I was getting stressed out. [3-20]

Another property of work readiness is tolerance of work hours (part-time or full-time work). Not all study-informants who were capable of maintaining employment felt they were ready to work full-time.

> I have been here for a while — it's been a year. I haven't been here a solid full year, but still, I've been coming. I wonder what [my case manager] thinks. I mean, does she think I should be doing something by now, or what have you. [sighs] 'Cause I'm not really [pause] yeah, I'm not really quite — not ready for full-time work right now. [2-576]

Study-informants also believed that it is difficult for any of the program staff to determine program participants' degree of work readiness. As one study-informant questioned: "But how can the [case managers] know beforehand if you're actually a good worker, skilled and competent? [2-798]" Assessment conducted by staff members based on a brief interaction with the program participants might not be adequate and the accuracy of the assessment would be questionable:

> Now when I took the training session for 3 days [at the AISH office], the instructor there didn't think I was ready to work full-time, and here [at the chosen agency], I got a job. [1-769]

It appeared that one reasonable assessment approach is a combined assessment by the case manager and the program participant and conducted while the program participants are engaging in job search or even in employment for a period of time. One study-informant thought attending some of the skills training sessions provided an opportunity for their case manager to get to know the program participants' current capability:

> ... but [going through the skills training modules] does help. Once you go through them here, the staff get to know you better, so they know where you are as far as the job goes. [2-709]

Work ethic

It was clear that all study-informants came to the chosen agency because they wanted to obtain paid employment. However, their expectations of themselves as workers vary. Those expectations or attitudes towards their own work performance are labeled as *work ethic* in this study. Study-informants suggested that the supported employment program had little impact on participants' work ethic. Rather, it might be the latter that determined partly how well one achieved program outcomes.

> Like, in any job you go to, there's your work habits, your attitude, your [pause] the way you go about your job. I don't know how [the program] can handle that here. But that's something that I think is so important beyond just an interview. I mean, once the interview's over, you have to perform, have to show what you can do, and [pause] so they haven't been able to speak too much about that. [2-409]... Well, for example, I told you I worked for [a grocery] store back in — for 2 1/2 months in '95. Now at that time, I wasn't really — to be quite honest, I wasn't really that good a worker, so I didn't do a great job for them. But then, later on, when I joined the army, that really raised the quality of the work that I did. But that's something — I think that's independent of [the chosen agency]. [2-808]

Similarly with work readiness, only time will tell how strong was the work ethic of study-informants.

> I think [work ethic] definitely influenced the way I handle different jobs. Like, in the army, for example, you have a very strong work ethic, and that is something that I think is very important at just about any job you do. That was influential before I came here. So that's something that at [the chosen agency], they don't really know how good a worker you are until you actually go to the job. [2-787]

Medication

There was consensus from the study-informants on taking medication. Although no question regarding their medication was asked in the interview, most study-informants raised that topic and stressed that taking medication is one of the key parts in managing their *mental problems* and consequently allowed them to fully participate in the supported employment program and paid employment.

> I don't think I could work without medication, 'cause then I'd start hearing voices again. I don't know if I could work without it. [6-634]
>
> I take pills to control it, so without the pills, I probably wouldn't be [the chosen agency]. [4-281]

Intervening Conditions - Environmental

Environmental factors also played a significant part in influencing study-informants' overall program experience and are discussed at two levels: the program level and the system level.

Facilitating - program level

The program level concerns the physical and social settings at the chosen agency. Study-informants described a number of positive points of the program that can be summarized as *facilitating*. They felt that if the environment of the chosen agency was welcoming it prompted them to return to the program.

> Informant: I like the environment, the atmosphere here.
>
> Interviewer: Tell me about the atmosphere here.
>
> Informant: It's pleasant and bright and cheerful, the place is; and the people are friendly here that work here. They're always saying hi to you when you come into the building. They're just very friendly. [4-215]
>
> So has — actually, there's a [person] here — the director [of the chosen agency], [he/she]'s been very helpful, too. Even when I got a job, when I got that one job, that work experience through here, [he/she] would say, "Oh, well, you got some jobs, some work." [He/She] was actually interested; [he/she] actually spoke to me for a few minutes about that, even though [he/she] wasn't my case manager, wasn't directly associated with me in that way. So that was very good. I mean,

> that made me feel more comfortable, more comfortable here. It's a nice place to come into. [2-213]

No matter how ready study-informants were to acquire employment, their experiences with their case manager were mostly positive. The assistance and support provided by their case manager was perceived by the study-informants as "dedicated". That kind of perception reinforced the study-informants to actively take part in maintaining two of the primary program outcomes: *forming a partnership* with their case manager and the sense of *becoming reassured.*

> The case managers are quite friendly. They really *care* if you get a job. That's about all I would say. [5-855]

> Well, one good thing I can say about this program [laughs] is that they are dedicated to help you find a job. Like, they *will* help you, and that's what I need. [3-118]… When I ask them to do something, they get right on it. They're very good with that. That's what it is: that's what they do, and they do it well. [3-140]

At the first glance, the title case manager is commonly associated with the medical model as a hierarchical superiority, in which case manager is a service provider and client is a relatively passive recipient. Data from this study suggest otherwise. The *partnership* with case managers was described by study-informants as "equal personality", in which the case manager provided support and assistance in a very respectful manner.

> Now we have this communication of equal personalities. I feel [my case manager]'s helping me. [He/She] believes in my confidence, [he/she] hasn't been knocking it. So it's helped me in that respect. [1-524]

Study-informants were involved in almost all decision-making at all stages of the supported employment process. One particular study-informant reported that while he/she was seeking assistance and opinions from his/her case manager, the case manager acted as if he/she were working for the study-informant rather than treating him/her as someone who was inferior:

> I brought in my resumé and [my case manager] updated that here, [My case manager] has my resumé on a disk here. [My case manger] even asked me, "Is this okay?" and showed me on the screen how it would look. [2-110]

Another facilitating aspect of this program is its *flexibility*. Case managers allowed participants to "pick and choose" based on their needs and preference. It also placed no restriction on how the participants sought employment.

> I didn't have to do their entire program. I could *pick and choose* what would actually help me. Like, I didn't have to sit through something about how to use Microsoft Word, or something like that, when I know how to use it. I didn't have to sit there, be bored, do something that I already knew how to do…Also, I was able to start job-hunting, basically, when I started the program, around the sessions. Then I was able to go to a couple after I did start working that would be helpful to me. Picking and choosing was the main thing I liked about this particular program. [5-185]

> I can look for a job independently and if I get one, that's perfectly fine [to my case manger]. I don't have to always go [the chosen agency] and use their resources. I can go — say, if I have a contact on the outside, or whatever else. Do you know what I mean? [2-373]…It's important because there's different ways of finding a job, and it's important to use all those ways before you exhaust your search. If it's too rigid, that can be constricting, and I don't want it to be constrictive working here, or finding work through here. [2-396]

In addition to the friendly atmosphere, most study-informants preferred coming to the chosen agency to look for employment rather than going anywhere else because the set up and atmosphere of the chosen agency facilitated their employment searches.

> To me, it's a difference. Here, I feel like I'm looking for a job, there's access to different things, so I feel better looking for work here than I do sitting at home looking at the paper. So to me, the orientation or the atmosphere prompts me to seek this employment that I'm looking for. [1-349]

> Yeah. Nobody else to find a job in the paper and say, "Oh, you're looking for this type of work. Maybe you should apply here." You're on your own; you don't have anybody telling you about a job or anything like that. [5-586]

On the other hand, one particular study-informant had some less positive experiences in the program. Although the factors that contributed to his/her experience were unable to be fully identified from the available data, it appeared that her relatively low level of *work readiness* might be one of the intervening factors.

> Like, my feeling, my gut feeling. I haven't — I've told my nurse that it stresses me to come [to the chosen agency], but I just feel that [sighs] I don't know how to explain it — I just don't feel really comfortable in this program. [3-63]

Another study-informant, although not finding the program environment negative, commented on how the social environment reminded him/her of some aspects of a mental health hospital. But that feeling only emerged for the first few times he/she went to the chosen agency and was not strong enough to deter him/her from continuously attending the program.

> Little nervous, little uncomfortable, because you're with a group of people, and all those people have disabilities of different kinds, so you're a little bit uncomfortable, type of thing. It was sort of like going back into the hospital, kind of, but it wasn't quite as intense as that. [7-89]… Well, because some of the people, they obviously had disabilities. My disability isn't quite as obvious as some people's, but there's deaf people and blind people and people with canes, and there's people who had — they'd have loud outbursts and stuff like that. So it kind of was like the hospital. There was all kinds of different people there that had disabilities. [7-97]

Disability income assistance policy - system level

System level concerns the policies and other related regulations of the local mental health and social welfare systems. Study-informants typically had lived on limited employment earnings or income assistance and appreciated the fact that they were not required to pay for accessing the supported employment program.

> All the programs that they have here — like the first aid, the interview skills, all that — that is all free here. So that is a nice thing that you don't have to pay for that. [2-633]

Data suggest that a strong environmental intervening condition is income assistance policy. In Canada, individuals who are unable to engage in paid employment because of severe disability are eligible to receive disability income assistance (Government of Alberta, 2002). Financial hardship did not come up as a dominant consequence of being unemployed. Only one study-informant recalled there was a time when he/she was concerned he/she had no income to pay his/her rent and bills because of unemployment. Nevertheless some study-informants found it "degrading" to rely on income assistance from the government, and that motivated them to look for paid employment.

> It's — like, taking a handout from the government, I personally find it — I don't like doing it. I don't think many people like doing it. I don't think anybody wants to be on social assistance or [disability income assistance] or whatever, unless you have to be. I don't think many people *want* to be. [7-563]

On the other hand, there was an indication from the data that disability income assistance policy had direct influence on study-informants employment plans. One concern for some study-informants was that they did not want to earn more than a certain amount of employment income so that they could continue to receive the full amount of income assistance.

> Income? Well, I'm getting [disability income assistance], so I'm okay that way. I don't have to worry. I get $200 a month from where I work. I'm not allowed to make more than that, because then [disability income assistance] will deduct from the [disability income] cheque. [6-259]...Well, I have to admit, you know, I rely on my [disability income assistance] quite a bit. I'm just afraid that if I make more than $200, then they'll start deducting off my [disability income assistance amount]. I think full-time work, part-time, is okay. [6-715]

The concern of income assistance reduction could perhaps partially explain why "having better employment income" is not the primary reason the study-informants wanted to be employed.

> The reason why I'm working is not really for the money. The money on top of my [disability income] cheque is nice. My [disability income] cheque is reduced because of my employment earnings, but the extra money is nice. But the main reason why I want to work is I want something to do with my day [laughs] that isn't a waste of time." [5-91]

Intervening Conditions - Person-occupation Interaction

In this study, the person-occupation interaction refers to how study-informants responded and reacted to employment and program related activities. It was about the level of compatibility between the demands of the occupation (i.e. job seeking activities as well as engaging in employment) and the individuals' capabilities.

Employment match

The purpose of engaging in employment in itself is to fulfill the tasks of the job (i.e. employment demands). Different jobs have different demands and require certain levels of skills, resources, and knowledge from the worker (i.e. worker's capabilities). Each study-informant, having various levels of skills and amounts of resources, bring in a unique set of values and expectations to his / her own employment. *Job match* therefore refers to the level of compatibility between the employment demands and the workers' capabilities.

> The [staff members]'ve done their best. They got me a job, but I mean, they've — and they've gotten me a lot of interviews and stuff, but it's just finding the right job and the right employer — *I guess a match* or whatever — that they'll tolerate a guy who's a little bit slower than average, type of thing. [7-424]

A good match of worker and employment not only made keeping the employment possible, but also brought in benefits of being employed. It is interesting to note that, data suggest that reported secondary supported employment program outcomes only occurred with good employment matches; and poor employment matches resulted in stress. This phenomenon is illustrated in figure 4-8.

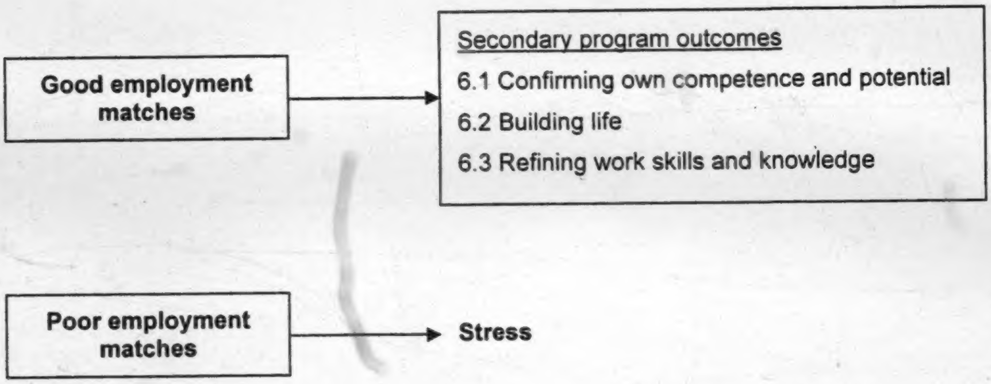
Good employment matches
Secondary program outcomes
6.1 Confirming own competence and potential
6.2 Building life
6.3 Refining work skills and knowledge
Poor employment matches
Stress

Figure 4-8. Relationship of *employment match* and secondary supported employment program outcomes.

Possible factors that made employment a good match were identified from the data: work pace, level of social interaction required, and flexibility of work schedule. Study-informants explained why they liked a particular job, and they also highlighted specific employment conditions that created a good job match.

> [That job] just suited me fine. I worked alone, and in my room alone, giving out cheques. I have a paranoia. Nobody stabbed me in the back. [1-654]

> And it's nice that they don't restrict you to two weeks vacation a year like some places will. That was why I was glad when I got hired there. They didn't have paid vacation, because I figured they'd be more lenient about taking time off that way. [5-402]

> I like the job I've got now, because it's a relaxed pace that you work at. You're not under any pressure. The boss isn't standing over your shoulder, watching you all the time. I found this job is ideal for me. [6-470]

Issue of education level was also brought up in this study and there were mixed opinions on how it affected study-informants' performance in employment.

> I feel sad a lot because I didn't study as much as I should have. That's probably why I have trouble getting a good-paying job, I think, is because of my schooling. Something I really regret is not keeping up in my studies. Bothers me quite a bit sometimes. I know now it's probably too late. [6-293]

> Well, there again, if you have physical capabilities, I don't think you're limited by your education. If you can physically do a job, the employer'll see that and they'll keep you on, type of thing, whether you're educated or not. But if you can't do it, if you don't perform, you don't get the job. [7-538]

Having a good employment match encouraged study-informants to extend their job tenure.

> For a while, I was happy. I did paying work through here for [a company], which is a temporary work agency, so I've been doing temporary assignments through them as a — on and off. [2-156]

> Yes. It would be a lot easier — although I'm not planning on quitting my job — to go get a new job. Because they are good about leaves of absences, to go to the same type of work there, I'd be taking almost a dollar wage cut an hour. Some other firms, they won't have any hours for a month and a half. [5-605]

> Because to get a job that I enjoy and stayed longer — like, I would like a year or 2 years long-term job in the job force… [4-323]

On the other hand, it was difficult to stay in poor employment matches. One factor that potentially contributed to poor employment matches was a heavy workload. No matter what were the contributing factors, a poor employment match was a source of job stress.

> Informant: Yeah, I don't feel tired like I did at the car wash.
>
> Interviewer: What's the difference? Do you know why?
>
> Informant: Car wash, at that — while I was there, I found it was very stressful because the owner of the company just wanted to hire as few people as he could. I found I was doing the work of three or four other people a lot of days. I found it was very stressful, so maybe that's what caused me to get tired and quit. [6-582]

> But I didn't do a very good job [during the 1-week work experience period]. I did an alright job, but they decided not to hire me at the end of the week. And just as well; I don't think I was really that well suited for that job [2-29]

The first day of a new job was often stressful for study-informants and applied to both good and bad employment matches. However for the former, the stress was temporary and should be differentiated from the relatively long-term work stress associated with the latter.

> The first day, I didn't think I would be able to last. I slept it off. Whatever thoughts went through my brain, all these insecurities, all these hard knocks I've had would go through my mind. I'd just go the next day and apply myself. [1-771]

Not all study-informants would keep the paid employment that they had acquired through the chosen agency, especially when they found their employment was a poor match to their capabilities. Once study-informants confirmed to themselves that the job match was poor, even though they liked the nature of the employment they would terminate it soon.

> I felt kind of sad. I didn't know if I should have quit the job. I was kind of unsure of myself, because I told the boss it was too much on my feet standing up, and it was bothering my feet. I liked the job, except it was just too much on my feet. [4-422]

> That's right. Being able to keep it. Some jobs you may not want to stay at it because they're not good jobs or you're not suited for them or whatever, but —. [2-238]… The thing is, some jobs may not be a good match; you may not be able to immediately mesh with the job. That's what happened with me at that [company] back in January; I didn't really mesh with that, so it didn't turn out that well. [2-794]

Study-informants would rather terminate poor employment matches (especially when they experienced high level of work stress) that jeopardize their mental health.

> Interviewer: So what was the reason that you quit the job?
>
> Informant: *Because it was difficult to adapt*, because the job was at night. I started at about 10:00, to 6:00 in the morning, type of thing. I was having trouble sleeping, and I couldn't — it was just really wreaking havoc with me. After two months, I just couldn't take it any more. [7-349]
>
> Interviewer: What was your emotion when you decided, "Well, I've got to quit the job"?
>
> Informant: It's either go insane or keep working. I had to leave. I was just going crazy. I couldn't take it. I wasn't sad or depressed or anything like that. [pause] I think I was happy that I quit *that* job, because it was too demanding sleep-wise. I couldn't sleep. [7-358]

Whether study-informants left on their own accord or were asked to resign from their employment, it created feelings of ambivalence and set back among study-informants.

> Well, the thing I really regret is quitting the jobs that I've had. I've had jobs in the past, and I've quit them all. I feel really bad about that a lot of days. [6-457]

Interviewer: Would that set your confidence back a little bit?

Informant: Oh, yeah. Sure it does. Because basically, I've been told at other jobs that I'm slow, too, type of thing, that I just can't keep up. I guess that's sort of my handicap, that I can't keep up. That's one reason I have difficulty holding a job, is because I'm slow. [7-404]

Study-informants emphasized that not being able to manage a poor employment match did not mean they were not capable working in the open labour market at all. The key was looking for other good employment matches. Study-informants hoped that they could have a "second chance" so they might eventually find a good employment match.

> Even if you are [good workers], people still screw up. These things happen, and [sighs] I'd like them to be able to understand that even though screw-ups happen, I'm still able to come in and do whatever kind of work that it is. [2-800]
>
> In case that job might not turn out well, and I would like another chance, a *second chance*. [4-86]

It became clear that study-informants would rather look for another job than stay in bad employment matches.

Interviewer: So after you quit the job, what was in your mind?

Informant: Look for a different job. Something that's not too stressful on your feet, like working in the sewing machines, sewing. [4-427]

Program match

The same idea applied to program match. Program match refers to the level of compatibility between the program demands and the participants' capabilities and expectations. Some study-informants preferred to attend supported employment programs than other socially oriented programs or other activity options.

> Because I'm a very social person. I do like to visit with people, and it doesn't work too well at day programs, because people are either too sick to really talk, or don't want to — like, are very introverted; couldn't survive at a job place, basically, who is at those programs. That sucks for me. [5-177]
> It's better than sitting at home. At least you're getting stimulated with other people and instructors, and you're getting outside and doing something. It's just better than lying around doing nothing, because it's boring. It's boring sitting at home. It is; it's *really* boring, and I suppose that's one reason I came down [to the chosen agency], because I was bored. I had nothing else to do, and came down here for something to do. [7-212]

It is no surprise that there was no one mental health program that could meet all needs. Supported employment programs are not for everyone with schizophrenia.

> Because I was starting whenever I started last year, I guess, and then I got too stressed, and I decided to drop out of [this supported employment program] and finish my exams. [3-39]

Strategies

Different kinds of strategies aimed at maintaining some primary supported employment program outcomes were suggested by study-informants. For example, study-informants would keep in contact with their case managers in order to preserve their *partnership*.

> Interviewer: What was the purpose for going out for coffee with [your case manager]?
>
> Informant: To touch base with [him/her], basically. [5-504]

> That's right. So there's that. [My case manager], I've spoken to; I keep in contact with [my case manager], and let [him/her] know how I'm doing, what I'm up to, what steps I've taken in obtaining work. [2-102]

Employed study-informants adopted a strategy of not disclosing to people at work the fact that they have disability. This strategy seems to help in sustaining employment.

> I did my work, I never let people in the coffee room know too much about me, and I stuck to myself, and I socialized outside of my job. In fact, I found that that helped with the paranoia I had. I was able to do this kind of work. [1-888]
>
> Some employers, when I've spoken to them, I've given them the impression that it's just like a placement agency. That's just how I'm using it as, that it's just assistant placement for finding a job. [2-300]
>
> They don't know I'm on any medication. The reason why I haven't told them is it doesn't affect my job performance, and I've been stable for quite a while. [5-529]

Summary of Findings

Supported employment program outcomes were identified based on seven program participants' experiences in the program. The central category: *becoming more prepared* is a theoretical representation of the identified program outcomes within the context of study-informants wanting to make their life better. A number of conditions that might intervene with the level or quality of program outcomes were also discovered and strategies that were used by the study-informants to sustain some of the program outcomes were suggested. In the next chapter, implications of these findings are discussed.

Chapter V - Discussion

This study focused on study-informants' perspectives on supported employment programs. Study findings were derived from first-hand experiences and reflections from seven study-informants who had participated in a selected supported employment program. Based on what is crucial and important to them, study-informants constructed meanings pertaining to supported employment program outcomes and consequences of obtaining employment in the open labour market. Furthermore, study-informants reported some related contextual information as well as a number of intervening conditions.

This chapter begins with an overview of the significance of the study findings, followed by comparing the reported supported employment program outcomes with related literature. Relevance of vocational outcomes to the supported employment programs based on study-informants' circumstances and values is examined. Then a section on methodology issues is presented. Insights gained from involving people with schizophrenia as study-informants in qualitative research are highlighted. To conclude this chapter, limitations of this study, implications for supported employment practice, occupational therapy, program evaluation, and future research are discussed.

Significance of Study Findings

This study enriches our understanding of people with schizophrenia who participate in supported employment programs. Findings from this study suggest that having schizophrenia, although negatively impacting on study-informants' daily functioning, does not rule out having vocational aspirations and dreams; however, the illness experience makes their realization more difficult. Study-informants spoke of changes happening to their job-seeking journey and perceived impacts on their life since they have started attending supported employment programs. Study findings suggest that study-informants experienced both vocational and non-employment related outcomes. Some of the identified program outcomes either had not been previously reported or were underrepresented in the existing literature.

The Process of Making Life Better and Supported Employment Program

The relationship between the process of making life better and attending supported employment program is discussed in the following section.

Life Path Deviation and Desire to Make Life Better

All study-informants expressed the view that their lives had changed since the onset of schizophrenia. Symptoms of schizophrenia created various "problems" such as stress and stigma, and these problems diminished study-informants' abilities to perform certain activities in daily life. Having schizophrenia is often associated with losses and struggles with employment (Krupa et al., 1998). All study-informants had been unemployed before they commenced the supported employment program.

For study-informants, consequences of unemployment were twofold and both led to a deviation from their desired way of living. First, unemployment negatively impacted on study-informants' self-image. Work routine and self-sufficiency are two social orders that are imposed on us in modern societies through an ongoing process of socialization. Adults are expected to work for a certain number of hours each week, and to provide for their own economic self-sufficiency. That socialization process influences the way study-informants formulate their values on employment, and governs study-informants' perception of loss and deprivation from being unemployed. No matter how much study-informants value work, being unemployed was often interpreted as not living up to the social expectations. Study-informants frequently associated unemployment with not being productive, social isolation, and exacerbating to a loss of touch with reality.

The second consequence of unemployment is that it led to a decrease in disposable income and resulted in restricted choices in life. In most modern societies, workers generally do not produce goods or services for self-consumption, rather they receive monetary income on a regular basis from work which allows them to purchase items and services to meet their daily needs. Therefore most people have to continue to work even when they find their work unsatisfying and meaningless (Stuckey, 1997). Although study-informants had been receiving disability income assistance, the amount is barely enough to support basic daily living. But life is more than food and shelter and it is not uncommon for people with severe mental illness to have insufficient economic resources to fulfill needs of basic living and their personal aspirations (Marrone & Golowka, 1999). Our study-informants expressed a similar concern. They were dissatisfied with their lives of unemployment because they were not able to afford pursuing hobbies, leisure or social activities that could have made their lives more meaningful and fulfilling.

Based on the above two phenomena, it appears that life path deviation experienced by study-informants is a result of not being able to measure up to the social expectations of work routine and self-sufficiency because of having schizophrenia. It is no surprise that study-informants described their illness experience as a vicious cycle of not having employment and being very much dissatisfied, and it was the dissatisfying life experiences that prompted study-informants to take action for making life better for themselves.

Employment as a Mean of Making Life Better

Study-informants had attempted to modify their lives in the hope that their way of living would get closer to the social expectations and at the same time remain congruent with their personal values. Some study-informants engaged in other routines during the day (e.g. sleeping at home, attending social/recreational programs, etc.) but realized that these activities only reinforced their identity as being mentally ill and socially segregated. Acquiring employment was considered by the study-informants as a strategy of achieving a better life.

Having employment was both appealing and important to all study-informants. Although the literature suggests numerous benefits of being employed (Revell, Kregel, Wehman, & Bond, 2000), most benefits seemed to be less tangible to our study-informants. Rather study findings supported the notion that people with mental illness have different views on expected outcomes of being employed (Provencher, Gregg, Mead, & Mueser, 2002).

Employment transforms study-informants' identities. Engaging in paid employment, whether full-time or part-time, is an interactive experience of utilizing one's own skills to handle ever changing demands at work and interacting with other people at the workplace. Only through this lived experience with employment were study-informants' capacities and competencies confirmed (Charmaz, 2002), and subsequently study-informants were able to shift their focus from their illness to functioning.

Employment also provided extra financial recourse for study-informants to pursue their desirable ways of living. For example, like others with different disabilities, study-informants had experienced social isolation and they desired to reconnect socially with other people (Davidson & Stayner, 1997). With additional employment income, employed study-informants could afford to go out to restaurants with friends or on trips more often, and thereby build a social life with people without disability, which seemed to be important to most study-informants. There were also psychological benefits of being employed. Even a small amount of employment earnings made study-informants feel more self-sufficient (no longer dependent entirely on disability income assistance), independent (able to make life choices with relatively fewer restrictions) (Kerlin, 1993) and contributing to society (Kirsh, 2000).

Supported Employment Program is a Key to Obtaining Employment

Study-informants all along understood that acquiring employment was no easy matter because of having schizophrenia and their history of unemployment. They attended supported employment programs and hoped that they would obtain employment through the programs. Nevertheless, participating in the supported employment program made obtaining employment possible and allowed study-informants to become *more prepared* for changing their lives. It was the positive experience of being employed that actually made study-informants' lives better.

Implications of Reported Supported Employment Program Outcomes

Study findings suggested six supported employment program outcomes. Some program outcomes are important in expanding our understanding of people with schizophrenia in supported employment programs, and are discussed below.

Forming a Partnership

Assigning a case manager to coordinate different levels of services provided to mental health consumers is a common practice. What makes *partnership* reported in this study unique is the characteristics of the working relationship between case managers and program participants. In spite of their disability and functional limitation, study-informants were encouraged to take on most responsibilities of job seeking and job maintenance. Program participants' active participation appeared to be essential in creating impact on their life.

One surprising finding from this study is that the level of direct assistance and support provided to the study-informants at the workplace is substantially less than one would expect based on the supported employment program principles. In theory, case managers providing additional support to program participants at the workplace is a good strategy that helps program participants to maintain employment, but in reality it is difficulty to implement because of lack of support by the employers and program participants' concern over being recognized as disabled in the workplace. Some workplaces would not allow case managers to visit program participants. Similarly program participants did not want their employer and co-workers to know that study-informants had an unseen disability and therefore did not want any visit by the program staff. This concern was echoed by informants in Brooke, Green, O'Brien, White, & Armstrong's (2000) study. Impact of this issue on job tenure and satisfaction should be further investigated.

Becoming Reassured

Study-informants were *becoming reassured* that they would eventually obtain employment through the supported employment programs. This reassurance was derived from observing case managers supporting program participants, and observing other program participants getting employment. This concept is under-represented in the literature on supported employment programs. A similar concept of *becoming reassured* can be found in literature of *recovery. Hope* has been reported as one of the components of recovery (Noordsy et al., 2002). Reassurance underpinned a sense of hope that participating in a supported employment program would lead to open employment. The importance of *becoming reassured* in the process of making life better for self is supported by Smith's (2000) proposition that critical factors in recovery include meaningful activities (which is employment or job seeking for study-informants) and a positive outlook on the present and future (which is feeling reassured about obtaining employment). Reassurance is also an intervening condition of both employment rate and job tenure and they are further discussed latter on in the section "Relevance of vocational outcomes".

Achieving a Better Self-image

Study-informants reported having a better self-image while participating in supported employment programs at the chosen agency. Factors that contributed to the improved self-image appeared to be multifaceted, but one unexpected finding is that obtaining employment in the open labour market was not the only causal condition. Study-informants consistently expressed the view that simply attending the supported employment program made them feel productive. Perhaps the decision to enter the workforce, together with the routine of job seeking, projected an image to themselves and others that study-informants were in the process of changing their lives.

This finding, in conjunction with some other study findings in the literature, suggests that improvement in self-image seems to be a common outcome reported by participants across various vocational programs. For example, Strong's (1998) study revealed that some people with severe and persistent mental illness who worked alongside other mental health consumers in a business operated under community mental health programs experienced positive changes in self-concepts.

Similar outcome was also reported by participants in some traditional vocational rehabilitation programs (Drake et al., 1999; Drake, McHugo, Becker, Anthony, & Clark, 1996). Perhaps it is not the nature of the work tasks or where the work activities take place that matter, rather it might be the respect received by the participants in the programs and the meanings the participants give to the activities based on their values and expectations that create such positive changes.

Our study-informants preferred working alongside and socializing with people without disability. Our study-informants appeared to represent a cohort of people with schizophrenia who felt that there was no other means as effective as obtaining employment in the open labour market to make life better.

Relevance of Vocational Outcomes to Study-informants

Vocational outcomes -- employment rate, employment earnings and job tenure -- are widely used in the literature to demonstrate the effectiveness of supported employment programs. Findings from this study confirmed that obtaining employment is important to all study-informants. Although employment rate, employment earnings, and job tenure seemed to be relevant outcomes to study-informants, these vocational outcomes are influenced by different conditions. For example, study-informants did not always target full-time employment, highest potential employment earnings and longest potential job tenure for any employment. The relationship between identified conditions and vocational outcomes are illustrated in figure 5-1 and are discussed in this section.

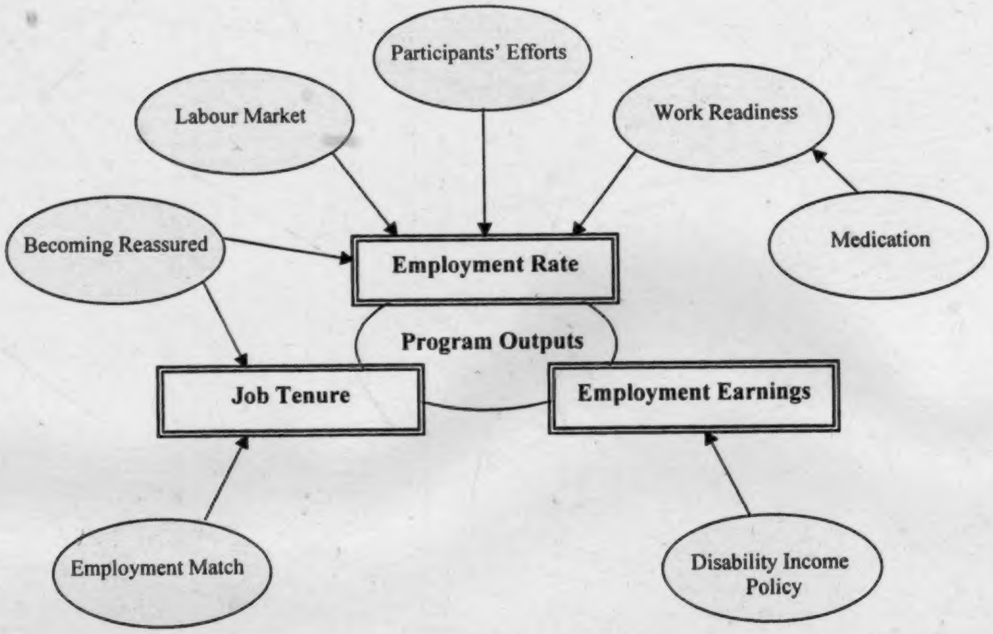

Figure 5-1. Identified intervening conditions of vocational outcomes.

Employment Rate

All study-informants wanted to be employed but they did not always target full-time employment, especially for their first employment. The first employment obtained by study-informants was typically on a part-time basis. Study-informants were cautious of not over-extending themselves in terms of working hours. They would not take on full-time employment until they felt they were ready. It appeared that other than having increased income, there was no particular advantage to study-informants of having full-time employment. Findings suggested that having part-time employment was sufficient in producing most of the reported positive consequences of being employed, and successfully transformed study-informants' identity from "being unemployed" to "being employed". Part-time employment also provided an adequate basis for study-informants to evaluate their own work readiness.

How soon and whether the study-informants were able to obtain employment (employment rate) appeared to be dependent on factors that were within and outside study-informants' control. The identified controllable factors were (1) work readiness, (2) reassurance, and (3) the amount of effort made by the program participants in job search. The identified uncontrollable factor was the availability of suitable employment openings in the labour market (Warner, de Girolamo, Belelli, Bologna, Fioritti, & Rosini, 1998).

Work readiness **-** The concept of *work readiness* is applicable to all employment-related activities. Work readiness is related to but different from the capacity to handle the demands of the supported employment program or employment. In this study, work readiness refers to program participants' interest and self-confidence in participating in the supported employment programs or employment (Cohen, Anthony, & Farkas, 1997). Individuals with high work readiness do not necessarily have adequate skills or resources to cope with the demands presented by the programs or employment. However, it appeared that only the program participants with high work readiness would stay in the supported employment program.

Study-informants displayed different levels of work readiness, but two key elements seemed to mediate their readiness for attending the supported employment program. These elements were "acceptance of disability" (Cunningham, Wolbert, & Brockmeier, 2000) and "willingness to make changes" (Hilburger & Lam, 1999). All study-informants acknowledged that they were disabled by schizophrenia. It is suggested that they had high acceptance of their disability and their focus was generally on making changes to their life. Study-informants were frustrated, not because they had schizophrenia, but mainly because they faced increasing hurdles in their lives and were perceived as being incapable in most aspects of life.

All study-informants wanted to make changes in their lives and wanted to have employment, but not all of them were ready for employment. There is no single path to enter the workforce and each path involves a number of steps. Program participants might be more ready to take one path rather than another, or they might be ready for the initial step but not beyond that. For example, one study-informant was not ready to arrange job interviews (intermediate step), but was actively pursuing educational upgrading (initial step).

We cannot assume that each program participant attending supported employment programs was fully ready for employment, especially if they were not well acquainted with the format or expectations of the programs. Some individuals might come to a supported employment program to give it a try without being aware of their low level of work readiness. Study-informants who seemed to have low work readiness found job seeking stressful and usually ended up dropping out of the program. This might partly explain the relatively high drop out rate (about 40%) in supported employment programs (Bond, Dietzen, McGrew, & Miller, 1995).

The above phenomenon supports the notion that not all people with schizophrenia benefit from supported employment programs (Bond, Becker, et al., 2001). Some people with schizophrenia are not ready psychologically or mentally for open employment. Therefore supported employment programs should be considered as an additional option for those who desire open employment, but not necessarily the best service for every person with schizophrenia.

Work readiness is a dynamic factor (Cohen et al., 1997). It is reasonable to expect that program participants' readiness would increase over time as long as their experiences in the program or employment are positive. Therefore program participants' level of readiness should be re-evaluated on an ongoing basis. Actively engaging in the program or employment also increases program participants' awareness of their readiness. Through being confronted by the program or job demands program participants become more aware of their interest in and self-confidence on employment. Measuring program participants' work readiness when they were already in the programs might provide a more reliable result.

Medication - Medication was reported in this study as an important intervention in controlling mental problems and therefore allowing study-informants to function in the supported employment program as well as open employment (i.e. improving work readiness). This is consistent with Hannigan, Bartlett, and Clilverd's (1997) study findings on mental health consumers perspectives on taking medication to improve mental health. Some medications, especially the newer types (atypical antipsychotics) demonstrate good efficacy in controlling positive symptoms associated with schizophrenia with fewer side effects (Tamminga, 1997). There is also preliminary support for the positive effect of atypical antipsychotics on cognitive functioning (Meltzer & McGurk, 1999). It is important to note that because of the cross sectional nature of these studies, any long-term effects of using medication on supported employment outcomes and the link between these two remains unclear (Bond & Meyer, 1999).

Becoming reassured – *Becoming reassured* is both a program outcome and intervening condition reported by the study-informants. As an intervening condition of employment rate, the sense of reassurance either motivated study-informants to continue acquiring employment or lessened pressure on them to take on employment prematurely. For the latter group, they chose to pace themselves in regards to achieving long-term vocational goals, such as re-focusing on education / qualification upgrading for the mean time.

Participants' efforts - The efforts made by study-informants were almost always necessary for their success in obtaining employment or making life better for self. Program participants who do not make enough effort in job search and job application activities appeared to have fewer jobs interview and therefore a lower chance of obtaining employment.

Employment openings - The occurrence of suitable employment openings is an identified uncontrollable intervening factor of program participants' employment rate. Even though an employment opening came up to the study-informants, as far as the study-informants were concerned, no special considerations were given to them at job interviews and each job interview remained an open competition. Study-informants were therefore competing with other job applicants with or without disabilities. There was no guarantee that the study-informants would obtain the job even though they received support and assistance from the program.

Some study-informants obtained employment through job leads from the chosen agency, others obtained job leads from outside sources. As job leads did not appear very often, most study-informants continued to rely on job postings.

The above propositions suggest that employment rate can be highly influenced by different intervening conditions and employment rate alone is limited as an outcome indicator reflecting the effectiveness of supported employment programs.

Job Tenure

Study-informants did not report job tenure as an important program outcome. They wanted to stay employed for an extended period of time only if the jobs were good employment matches (Becker, Drake, Farabaugh, & Bond, 1996; Mueser, Becker, & Wolfe, 2001).

Employment match - The interplay between study-informants and occupations (program tasks and employment) has a significant impact on study-informants' experiences in the supported employment programs. Study findings confirmed that employment match (a match between employment demands and worker's skills) was an important factor that strongly influenced the study-informants' employment experiences (Dorio, Guitar, Solheim, Dvorkin, & Marine, 2002; Westmorland, Williams, Strong, & Arnold, 2002).

The effect of employment matches on study-informants' experiences is very similar to the key concept of flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi & Moneta, 1996). Flow theory suggests that a balance of challenges and skills in activities has a positive effect on the quality of subjective experiences and a successful search for flow is more likely to happen in more complex but structured activities, like certain types of employment. Findings of this study provide some validation to flow theory.

Depending on the level of employment match, the first employment that study-informants acquired through the supported employment program might or might not create the desired changes in their ways of living. There are two possible scenarios for poor employment matches: skills exceed demands, and demands exceed skills. However when skills match demands it results in a positive employment experience.

Study-informants related unbearable job stress to poor employment matches and if the situation was not handled properly, job stress could potentially be detrimental to their health (O'Flynn & Craig, 2001). Reasonable accommodation in the workplace is considered a key component of supported employment programs in maximizing employment match and is believed to be an essential element for longer job tenure (Dorio et al., 2002; Ralph, 2002). It is believed that the lower the job stress level, the better chance that of the program participant retaining their job. However, most study-informants did not seem to receive any job accommodation at their workplace probably because the study-informants did not disclose their illness history to their employer. Job stress seemed to be unavoidable in some situations, just like most workers without disability. Some study-informants quit their employment when they realized that they could no longer cope with the job stress. They would not risk their mental health by staying in a poor employment match. This seems supported by the fact that poor employment matches almost always result in termination of employment (Becker, Drake, et al., 1998).

Krupa et al. (1998) found that some supported employment program participants experienced stress while looking for a job because they perceived themselves as being disadvantaged in job seeking overall. A few study-informants in the current study also reported stressful experiences but they were related to low work readiness, which is when they were "pushed" to conduct job searches and to arrange job interviews. For other study-informants in this study, looking for a job did not create much stress.

Study-informants reported a number of characteristics of good employment matches, but there was no agreement on a set of universal criteria for good employment matches. The conclusion is that the criteria were highly personal and they varied from one study-informant to another. Salary and type of employment did not come out as dominant criteria (Camardese & Youngman, 1996).

Employment matches are dynamic in nature. Employment demands might change over time and program participants' skill level can also be improved (Kupper & Hoffman, 2000). As a result, over time the perception of the quality of employment match might change (Young, 2001). Some study-informants expressed a concern that the employer expected fewer workers to do the same amount of work. Others talked about how they were stressed by a job at the beginning but a few months later found the same employment routine and dissatisfying as their skill level improved (Bedell, Draving, Parrish, Gervey, & Guastadisegni, 1998). In both cases, the desire to change employment would increase.

An interesting finding is that some study-informants who had a history of employment were willing to take on jobs that were at a *lower level* than those they had in the past. This strategy might be a measure of rapidly regaining worker identity and reestablishing positive work experiences, especially if study-informants had been out of the workforce for an extended period and were no longer sure of their own work capacity. This group of study-informants appeared to have a tendency to feel dissatisfied with their work later on and wanted to move on to other employment.

Indeed most study-informants in the supported employment program acquired entry-level employment which is generally associated with short job tenure for those with and without disability (Draine, Salzer, Culhane, & Hadley, 2002). It is estimated that for non-disabled workers in entry-level employment, about 90% will leave their job within the first year (Adams-Shollenberger & Mitchell, 1996). If this is a general trend, people with schizophrenia should similarly not be expected to remain in the first employment they obtain. This is supported (at least for some cases) by McDonald-Wilson, Revell Jr., Nguyen, & Peterson's (1991) observation that only a portion of supported employment program participants stayed in their first employment after one year.

It is concluded that job termination can be a consequence of either low work readiness or poor employment matches and their mechanisms are slightly different. Individuals with low work readiness perceive themselves as being not ready to manage any employment no matter if it is a good or poor employment match. On the other hand, a requirement to achieve positive experience would be a good employment match and high work readiness.

Obtaining the "right job" in the "right company" on the first try is extremely rare even for individuals without a disability (Brooke, Revell, & Green, 1998). In this instance, employment termination can sometimes be considered as a strategy in maintaining participants' mental health or seeking higher level of work challenge.

Therefore job termination is not always negative (Becker, Drake, et al., 1998). The assumption that all employment terminations (especially poor employment matches) are indications of lack of overall ability to maintain employment is worth re-examination.

Becoming reassured – As discussed in the previous section, reassurance is an intervening condition of employment rate. It is also an intervening condition of job tenure. Having a sense of reassurance (that it is possible to obtain employment through the supported employment programs) encouraged study-informants to shorten the job tenure of poor employment matches and to look for a better employment match.

Therefore, when measuring job tenure, factors such as quality of the employment match, program participants' increase in skills and aspirations, and the degree of accommodations at the workplace should be taken into consideration. In addition, it might be more meaningful to measure the overall period of being employed, rather than length of each specific employment.

Employment Earnings

Employment earnings have been considered a fundamental motivation for obtaining employment in modern society (Stuckey, 1997). Study-informants in the current study had a unique view on employment earnings and study findings suggest that employment earnings could be influenced by disability income assistance policy.

Disability income policy - Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) is a disability benefit that provides income assistance and medical benefits to individuals whose ability to earn a livelihood is severely impaired by permanent disability (Alberta

Human Resources and Employment, 2003). The amount of disability income assistance is reduced if recipients have employment earnings beyond two hundred dollars per month. Figure 5-2 shows the sliding scale of employment earnings in relation to the amount of disability income assistance and net income.

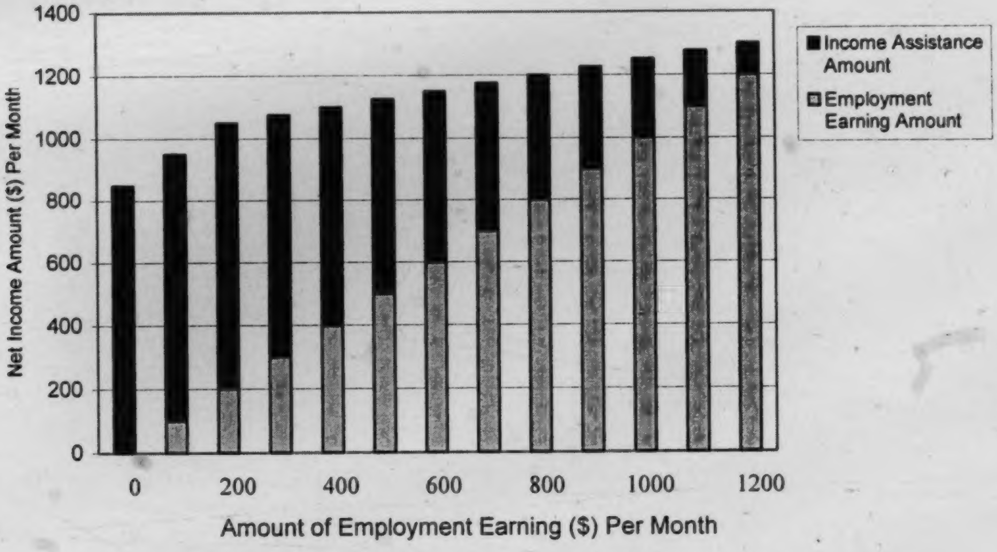

Figure 5-2. Relationship of employment earning amount on net income amount for unmarried people on disability income assistance.

All study-informants were receiving disability income assistance during the time of this study. Even when they became employed, they preferred to continue receiving disability income assistance to cover basic needs such as food, shelter, and probably health benefits. They made use of the "extra income" to make their lives more enjoyable by purchasing goods unrelated to basic living (e.g. "to buy clothes when I want to buy clothes, not the clothes that I need, but clothes that I want!", "extra art supplies", etc.).

There was variation in study-informants' views on disability income assistance. Some employed study-informants did not mind that their disability income assistance was reduced, while others acknowledged that they preferred to receive the full amount. The latter group was less willing to earn more than two hundred dollars per month of employment income. It is unknown why such variation occurred, but possible factors might include: (1) study-informants' level of understanding of disability income policy, and (2) their perceived likelihood of becoming unemployed and back to relying on disability income again.

An interesting point is that those who found receiving income assistance demeaning and wanted to be self-sufficient did not express a desire to give up income assistance totally and rely solely on employment earnings. None of the study-informants measured their personal or vocational success on the amount of employment earnings. These phenomena challenge an assumption made in previous quantitative studies that employed program participants were striving for their highest potential employment income.

It is not difficult to understand why people with schizophrenia don't want to give up their income assistance. First of all, there is cost of working, such as expenses on clothing for work, transportation, and in some cases child care (Turton, 2001). Individuals making employment earnings of the same amount of the disability income assistance amount always end up having less disposable income. Secondly, recipients of disability income assistance also receive additional coverage for medication. Depending on their employee benefit program, giving up disability income assistance and relying entirely on employment income may also mean paying extra for prescription medications. Being employed in a low-wage job without any income supplement is actually financially detrimental (Kerlin, 1993). Last but not least, in principle the amount of net income (combined amount of both employment earning and disability income assistance) received by AISH recipients is always higher if they have employment earnings in any amount; however, once the AISH recipients earn more than two hundreds dollars, the amount of effort put into employment is not proportional to the amount of net income. For example, once the AISH recipients earn more than two hundred dollars per month, an extra 38 work hours per week (assuming at entry-level jobs offering minimal wage) only yields two hundred and fifty dollars more of actual net income amount.

In the literature, there is limited empirical data indicating that disability income assistance is a work disincentive. Whether the low employment rate among people with schizophrenia is due to lack of work capacity or due to a work disincentive from receiving disability income assistance was unclear. Findings from this study indicate that a decreased opportunity to acquire stable employment, and a reduced capacity to participate in employment related activities to the level of achieving self-sufficiency might serve as possible explanations. The fact that all study-informants in this study wanted to obtain employment despite receiving disability income assistance suggests that disability income assistance played little role in discouraging some people with schizophrenia from seeking employment. At this point, we can only conclude that disability income policy is an intervening condition to *employment earnings* for at least some program participants.

In view of that, using "employment earnings" to measure program participants' vocational success in supported employment programs without considering disability income policy as an intervening condition might not be as useful as previously speculated.

Implications of Work Ethic

Work ethic is an individual's values and expectations about the importance of work within a particular culture and society (Stuckey, 1997). Some employed study-informants emphasized the importance of having a strong work ethic for maintaining employment. It appeared that some study-informants continued to work intermittently since the onset of their illness, even though they considered some of their previous employment as "low class labour". For them, being employed was particularly important and meaningful. There was evidence from another study suggesting that continuing some form of work is essential to maintain a sense of self for individuals with a strong work ethic (Strong, 1998). Individual's work ethic might be an intervening condition to both work history as well as willingness of maintaining employment obtained through the supported employment programs. It is speculated that individuals with a stronger work ethic tend to take employment more seriously and make more effort to stay employed than those with a weak work ethic, and therefore hypothetically the former group should have relatively longer work history as well as a better employment record in the supported employment programs. If this is the case, this new hypothetical suggestion (figure 5-3) may expand a previous proposition (figure 5-4) that people with longer work histories tend to have a better employment outcome in supported employment programs (Becker, Bond, et al., 2001).

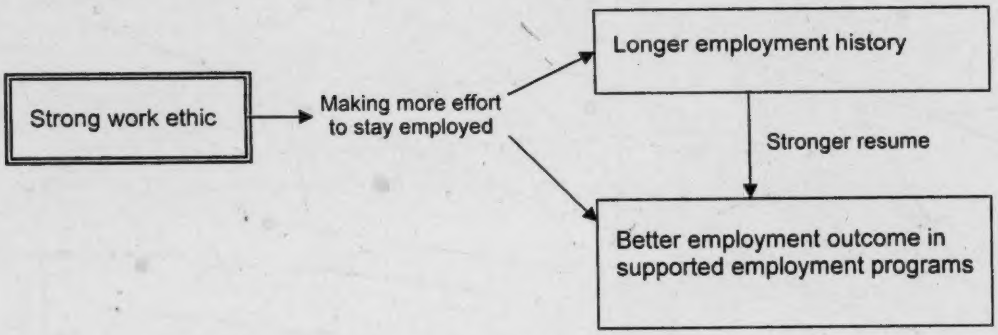
Strong work ethic
Making more effort to stay employed
Longer employment history
Stronger resume
Better employment outcome in supported employment programs

Figure 5-3. New hypothetical relationship between work ethic, employment history, and employment outcome in supported employment programs.

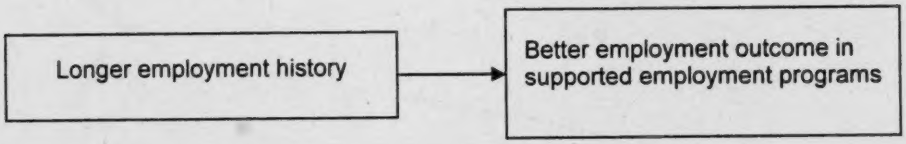
Longer employment history
Better employment outcome in supported employment programs

Figure 5-4. Previous proposition of relationship between employment history and employment outcome in supported employment programs.

Implications of Strategies

Issue of Disclosure

Study-informants reported that they utilized discrete disclosure as one strategy to maintain employment obtained through the supported employment program. For example, some study-informants gave potential employers the impression that the chosen agency is an employment placement agency. Their non-disabled co-workers might be aware that the study-informants were on medications, but none of the study-informants talked openly about illness to their co-workers.

Perhaps the stigma attached to mental illness remains strong enough in our society that disclosing such information may elicit an unfair judgment on them or even discrimination. Disclosure is a condition of receiving job accommodation at the workplace (Ralph, 2002) and therefore it was common that most study-informants did not receive any job accommodation at the workplace. One study-informant planned to increase disclosure to his/her employer only if his/her mental condition deteriorated and when taking time off from work for an extended period became unavoidable. No study-informant of this study expressed any stress with keeping their illness secret at the workplace like study-informants in Kirsh's (2000) study. The high variability of disclosure among program participants across studies suggests that it may be a matter of personal preference and circumstances.

Methodology Issues

A number of methodology issues pertaining to this study were identified and are discussed below.

Recruitment Challenge

In this study, the burden on study-informants is the time required to complete one interview. Despite that, recruiting study-informants was more challenging than anticipated. Some potential study-informants were difficult to locate. Others were unwilling to attend even the introduction session. The principal investigator decided not to recruit study-informants from other employment programs, because differences between employment programs in terms of program components and core principles adopted would significantly impact on program participants' perceived program outcomes, as it was discussed in the *Research Method* chapter. In retrospect, it might be more effective in letting potential study-informants get to know this study if recruitment information was made available at the chosen agency in the form of a poster.

Another challenge faced by the principal investigator was recruitment timing. Ideally, the interview schedule should be arranged in such a way that the potential study-informants were contacted one at a time, so that it would leave sufficient time for the principal investigator to conduct preliminary data analysis in between interviews. In this study there was a concern that potential study-informants, who were willing and appropriate to participate in this study when they were first contacted, might find participating particularly overwhelming later if there was a change of their mental condition. It actually happened to one of the potential study-informants; and for ethical reasons, the principal investigator felt obligated to encourage that potential study-informant to put mental health as priority and to disregard the invitation. Except if there are large number of potential study-informants available, it is recommended that for studies involving vulnerable population, once potential study-informants agree and are determined to be appropriate to participate in the study, interview arrangements should be made as early as possible.

Data Collection Issues

Individual interview was the primary data collection strategy for this study. Observing program participants at the chosen agency or at their work site could have potentially increased the richness of data but however, was not feasible for this study. In terms of work site visit, some study-informants reported that they did not feel comfortable having their case manager visit them at the workplace even for a brief moment during regular work hours. It would therefore not have been feasible for the principal investigator to observe the study-informants at their workplace for an extended period of time.

Some study-informants in this study were relatively more passive and less articulate. They might hesitate to participate in group discussion, or be easily pressured to conform to group consensus in group interview or in a focus group format. In addition, the presence of others (either known or not known by the study-informants) might deter study-informants from sharing some of their more personal issues (Mayan, 2001). Illness and employment experience are highly personal matters, and should be kept confidential from other program participants. Individual interviews seemed to be a more suitable data collection format for this study population.

Some study-informants tended to give short verbal responses even though most questions used in the interviews were open-ended. The use of probe questions (pre-planned or arising from the flow of the interview) proved to be an effective strategy to elicit ideas and opinions from this population. For the most part, individual interviews seemed to provide the quality of data required.

There was also a concern that most people with schizophrenia cannot tolerate a long interview. Experience from this study suggested a different picture. Our study-informants were usually quite reserved at the beginning of the interview, but they almost always opened up more in about half an hour as long as the principal investigator took the time to establish rapport and trust. Most interviews lasted for about an hour and none of the study-informants complained that the interviews were too long. Interviews that are restricted to a shorter duration might not give this population enough time to fully express themselves.

Audiotaping

The use of audiotaping in data collection did not seem to create any concern to study-informants in this study. No study-informant objected to audiotaping the interview, nor did any of potential study-informants decline the interview because it would be audiotaped. Only one study-informant reported at the end of the interview that he/she found it a bit "weird" because his/her conversations had never been audiotaped before. Most study-informants appeared to engage easily in the dialogue with the principal investigator. Audiotaping is essential in qualitative studies and the purpose of audiotaping ought to be explained clearly to the study-informants in a respectful manner.

Limitations of the Study

The study findings represent a single perspective (that of program participants) of the subject matter. Perspectives from program personnel, mental health professionals, employers, participants' family members, policy makers, and society at large are similarly important but were not explored in this study. Therefore, the suggested substantive theory should be used to explain a part of the complex social phenomenon of individuals with schizophrenia participating in supported employment programs. In addition, the substantive theory is not a terminal theory and is subject to ongoing refinement by other researchers alike.

This study is based on data from a very distinct population: people with schizophrenia who desired paid employment. Generalization of the study findings should be limited to populations of similar characteristics and contexts.

Potential study-informants were first contacted by their assigned case manager at the chosen agency. Whether potential study-informants were willing to participate in this study and meet with the principal investigator for the introduction session may be partly affected by their experience in the program as well as their relationship with their case manager. It is possible that those with less than positive experiences in the program or with their case manager were less willing to participate in this study. Therefore, less than positive program outcomes might be under-reported using this recruitment process.

The small number of available potential study-informants limited the use of theoretical sampling. To minimize the burden on study-informants the principal investigator did not meet with the study-informants a second time for verification of study findings (member check). The principal investigator was concerned that a perceived high burden on study-informants would increase the likelihood of study-informants' refusing to participate in this study. Emerging concepts were verified mainly through a constant comparison method.

Implications of the Study

Studies on program participants' perspectives have contributed insights on how human services can be further improved so that they can better meet the program participants' needs. The same insights also raise questions about certain assumptions held regarding the evolution of and research outcomes of supported employment. The following are implications of this study for supported employment practice, program evaluation and future research.

Implications for Supported Employment Practice

1. Supported employment programs are not for everyone. Positive results from a few supported employment program evaluation studies alone are not grounds to suggest that every individual with a diagnosis of schizophrenia will benefit from attending supported employment programs. The appropriateness of referrals made to supported employment programs should be based on the level of readiness and needs of the potential program participants rather than their capacity to handle the program / employment demands. Assessments of readiness and needs should be an ongoing process. Those who express a desire to obtain open employment should be provided with supported employment programs as a rehabilitation option. Potential participants should be educated regarding the objectives, nature and expectations of the supported employment program so that they can make informed decisions for themselves.
2. As job stress is related to poor employment matches, program participants should be supported if they decide to quit the bad employment matches (Abramson & Joseph, 1994/95). Continual support and assistance should be provided to the program participants in searching for better employment matches.
3. All study-informants appreciate being treated as competent individuals and it is worth considering incorporating this approach as an additional principle of supported employment practice.

4. Ongoing support seemed to be vital for the long-term employment success of people with schizophrenia although it might be challenging to provide such support in the workplace. Program staff should continue to provide support in an innovative fashion.

Implications for Occupational Therapy

Theory development and practice are integrated activities of a profession (Kielhofner, 1997). The substantive theory developed from this study contributes to the building of theoretical knowledge of occupational therapy in the area of productivity. Because of its relevance to occupational therapy, this substantive theory has higher practical value to occupational therapists in terms of guiding day-to-day practice than theories generated by other disciplines.

1. Occupations are "daily living tasks that are part of an individual lifestyle… and they are required to support participation in an individual's roles" (Golledge, 1998, p.100). Findings from this study reaffirm the client-centred practice principle that program participants gave meaning(s) to their own occupations based on their personal values and their lived experiences of engaging in occupations. While occupational therapists enable clients to perform at their highest potential in occupations, this research verifies that it should be the clients who define their own occupations and set the standard of target performance so as to ensure that expectations and demands are within the control of the clients.
2. The study findings indicated that individuals' level of functioning can be influenced by environmental factors. Therefore supported employment program

participants' ability to function or to achieve improved level of function has the potential to be further enhanced through positive change in clients' political and social environment. Occupational therapists have a micro and a macro role to play in this regard. First from a micro level, occupational therapists have the skills to prepare the actual work environment for program participants. Using an educational approach, for example, counseling sessions and training programs with employers and co-workers could be developed, focusing on mental health problems and stigma, especially with a view to gaining the cooperation and assistance of co-workers. Occupational therapists could lead on the development of such programs, could deliver such programs, or could train others to deliver the programs. In this way the workers within the placement organizations would be better informed about previously poor experiences; they would have strategies for helping program participants, and thus would be more prepared and hopefully committed to making the placement successful for participants. Second from a macro level occupational therapists have an important role in raising public awareness and acceptance of mental illness through, for example, supporting participants in publishing their success stories and stories of the struggle to regain employment. Occupational therapists may also want to consider their role in supporting participants in lobbying government for changes in policy that effects their ability to work.

3. Disclosure of program participants' mental illness to employers is sometimes necessary for negotiating job accommodations but at the same time such disclosure may attract the stigma experienced by those who have mental health

problems. This highlights the challenge of people with schizophrenia adopting compensatory strategy in the open labour market. For the mean time, if the cost of disclosing program participants' mental illness outweighs the benefit of possible job accommodations, occupational therapists should focus their effort on empowering program participants. One such empowerment approach is to encourage program participants to be critically aware of factors/ intervening conditions identified in this study that hinder or enhance their ability to function (Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998). Such knowledge and understanding would provide the program participants with the insight to take an active role in (a) adjusting own expectations on the supported employment program outcomes with referring to their own level of work readiness, the amount of effort that they put into the program, and current labour market conditions; and in (b) making decision on keeping or terminating employment based on employment match.

Implications for Program Evaluations

1. Outcome indicators used in program evolutions must be well defined. Outcome indicators of different natures (i.e. all/no, cumulative, fluctuating, fluid, etc.) require different measurement approaches. For example, a quantitative approach might not be always appropriate for outcomes that are "fluid" in nature (e.g. forming a partnership).
2. It is possible that mental health programs produce outcomes that are unanticipated. Without supporting evidence, we should not assume that program participants have received all planned program outputs and therefore program

objectives might not be an accurate representation of all potential outcomes of program outputs. In addition, the absence of specific outcomes may be due to a lack of rather than ineffective program outputs (Patton, 1997).

3. Outcome indicators selected for program evaluations should be congruent with the level of intervention. For example, if the program only makes the participants more prepared for a specific outcome, it might be more valid to measure their level of preparedness than the frequency of occurrence of that specific outcome.
4. External uncontrollable intervening conditions of outcomes (e.g. employers' attitude, current labour situation, etc.) should be taken into account when interpreting evaluation results.
5. Dissatisfied program participants might be indicative of a poor match between the program participants and the objectives and demands of the programs or a low level of participants' readiness for attending such programs. Negative comments from a few program participants should not be used to discredit the effectiveness and potential of mental health programs.

Implications for Future Research

This research study is an initial effort to highlight the complex interplay between people with schizophrenia and supported employment program outcomes. Future research in this area will contribute to further enhancing our understanding on this subject matter.

Replication of this study in different supported employment programs with a larger number of study-informants will be useful in confirming how variations in program outputs and characteristics of program participants might affect the program outcomes as well as the efficacy of the intervening conditions. In sampling program participants of diverse characteristics, some suggested characteristics are: married / in a common-law relationship, with dependents, single parents, or living with family, etc. Another direction is to sample program participants who drop out of the program or prefer socially oriented day programs. Likewise, a similar research approach to explore perspectives of employers, co-workers, and family members might yield insightful findings.

A longitudinal qualitative study design focusing on process of change in program outcomes might provide useful information on the stability of the reported program outcomes and possibly the temporal characteristics of intervening conditions.

Conclusion

Some people with schizophrenia are engaging in a process of improving their lives and they used the mean of obtaining employment. Program participants experienced some vocational and non-employment related outcomes, which are influenced by different intervening conditions. The identification of the intervening conditions suggesting that program participants' experiences in the supported employment programs are not a linear model of program outputs directly producing related program outcomes. Nevertheless, supported employment programs make our study-informants more prepared for such life changing process and the positive experiences of participating in employment made this process happen for them. There are different factors and conditions that determine whether supported employment program is an appropriate intervention and therefore supported employment program should be considered as an option and may not always be the best choice for all.

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Appendix A

Outcome Indicators Used in Supported Employment Studies for People with Mental Illness -- Published in Recent 8 Years (Table 2-1)

Table 2-1

Outcome Indicators Used in Supported Employment Studies for People with Mental Illness (Published in Recent 8 Years)

	Studies	Indianapolis Study	New England Follow-up Study	New England Replicated Study	New Hampshire Study	Long Beach / Stanislaus Study	Northern New England Study	New Hampshire Follow-up Study	Rhode Island Project
Vocational Outcomes	Competitive Employment Rate	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
	Wage Earnings	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
	Job Tenure	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
	Job Performance	*							
	Promotability								
Clinical / Social Outcomes	Quality of Life				*		*	*	
	Self Esteem				*	*	*	*	*
	Substances Use				*			*	
	Hospitalization Rate	*		*	*		*		*
	Psychiatric Symptoms				*		*	*	*
	Stress Level								
	Satisfaction	*			*		*		*
	Global Assessment Scale				*				
	Number of Non-vocational Activities						*		
	Positive and Negative Effects		*						
	Support Needed								
	Social Interaction at Work								
	Social Contacts								*
	Incarceration			*					
	Homelessness			*					
	Suicide Attempts			*					
	Reference	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4,5,6,7,8,9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13,14**

	Studies	Secondary Data Analysis of 5 Studies	Washington DC Inner-city Study	Oregon Project	Irish Study	Hong Kong Study	Fukushima Study	Connecticut Study	Fairfax Study
Vocational Outcomes	Competitive Employment Rate	*	*	*		*	*	*	
	Wage Earnings		*			*			
	Job Tenure		*			*		*	*
	Job Performance								
	Promotability								
Clinical / Social Outcomes	Quality of Life		*		*				
	Self Esteem		*						
	Substances Use								
	Hospitalization Rate		*	*			*		
	Psychiatric Symptoms		*		*				
	Stress Level								
	Satisfaction		*					*	*
	Global Assessment Scale		*						
	Number of Non-vocational Activities								
	Positive and Negative Effects								
	Support Needed			*					
	Social Interaction at Work								
	Social Contacts								
	Incarceration								
	Homelessness								
	Suicide Attempts								
	Reference	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**

	Studies	New Hampshire Comparison Study	Vermont Study	Midwestern States Secondary Data Analysis	Eight States Secondary Data Analysis	Chinook Clubhouse Study
Vocational Outcomes	Competitive Employment Rate	*	*	*		
	Wage Earnings				*	
	Job Tenure				*	*
	Job Performance					
	Promotability					
Clinical / Social Outcomes	Quality of Life					
	Self Esteem					
	Substances Use					
	Hospitalization Rate					
	Psychiatric Symptoms					
	Stress Level					
	Satisfaction	*				
	Global Assessment Scale					
	Number of Non-vocational Activities					
	Positive and Negative Effects					
	Support Needed				*	
	Social Interaction at Work				*	
	Social Contacts					
	Incarceration					
	Homelessness					
	Suicide Attempts					
	Reference	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**	**27**

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20. Fuller, Oka, Otsuka, Yokoyama, Liberman, & Niwa (2000)
21. Mueser, Becker, & Wolfe (2001)
22. Resnick, & Bond (2001)
23. Young (2001)
24. Becker, Smith, Tanzman, Drake, & Tremblay (2001)
25. Jones, Perkins, & Born (2001)
26. Banks, Charleston, Grossi, & Mank, (2001)
27. Dorio, Guitar, Solheim, Dvorkin, & Marine (2002)

Appendix B

Timeline of this Study (Figure 3 -1)

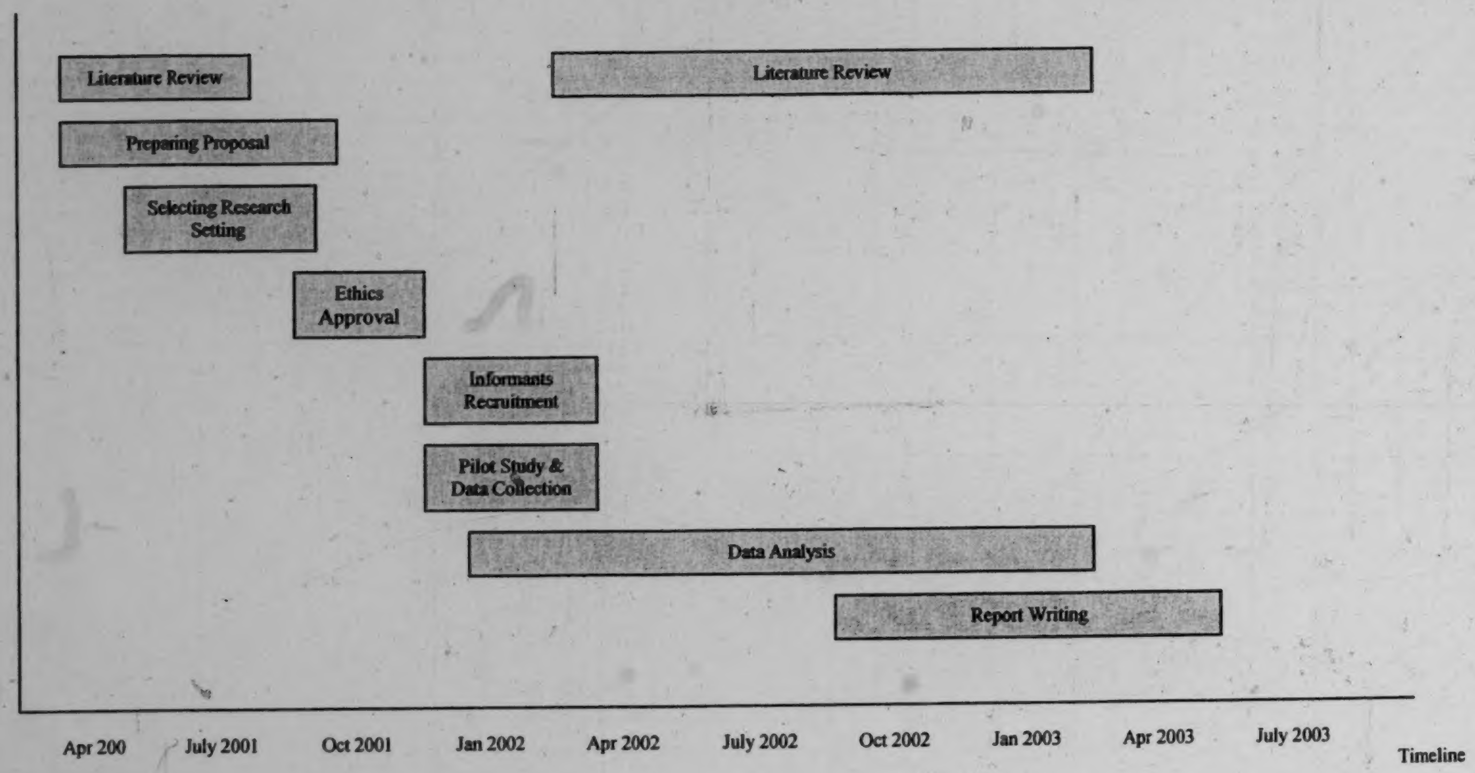

Figure 3 -1. Timeline of this study.

Appendix C

Confidentiality Form

Confidentiality Form

I, ______________________________, agree to take on the position of typist for the research study: "Supported Employment Program Outcomes: The Participants' Perspectives". I agree not to disclose any information (including study informant's personal data and transcript) that I obtain from this research study to third party. I understand that after the interview is transcribed, I have no right to keep interview data in any format (audio tape, computer file, or hard copy).

______________________________	______________________________
Signature of typist	Date
______________________________	______________________________
Signature of researcher	Date

Appendix D

Consent Information Sheet

Consent Information Sheet

Title: Supported Employment Program Outcomes: The Participants' Perspectives

Investigator: David Liu, BSc, OT(C)
Master of Science student, Department of Occupational Therapy,
University of Alberta

Phone Number:

Supervisor:
Chair and Professor, Department of Occupational Therapy,
University of Alberta

Phone Number:

Purpose:

I would like to understand your experience in this employment program. I am interested in knowing whether the program has changed your daily life in any way.

Procedure:

I will interview you only one time. But if you would like the interview to be in two parts, a second interview could be arranged. I will record the interviews with a tape recorder. The only reason I am recording is to ensure accuracy. What you say on the tape will be typed out, but I will not include you name on the typed pages. I will keep the tapes and the typed pages for at least 5 years after the study has been completed. I will not include your name or the name of the agency in any reports of the study findings.

The interview will take place in a conference room close to the [chosen agency] or a place that we both agree. The interview will last for about an hour. Interview questions are related to your background and your experience of supported employment outcomes.

Benefits and Risks:

What you tell me in the interview is very important. It will help us to determine how good the program is, and how to make it even better. I don't think there is any harm to you in participating in this project. However, a potential risk is that you might feel uneasy. It might happen when you share some sensitive personal information and your experience in the program. If it happens, I will provide assistance by referring you to appropriate services, such as your mental health worker, psychiatrist, etc.

Investigator's initial: _________ Study informant's initial: _________

Confidentiality and Study informants' rights:

What you tell me in the interview will be used for research and publication purposes. The information will be kept under lock and key in a filing cabinet. Only my supervisors and I are allowed to read the information. However, if I realize that you are in any danger or in danger of harming anyone else, I am obliged to report that to your psychiatrist and/or appropriate agencies. Your name will not appear on any of the forms or related publications. The information you give me in the interview may be looked at again in the future to help us answer other study questions. If so, the ethics board will first review the study to ensure the information is used ethically.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in this project, and it will not affect you receiving supported employment at the [chosen agency]. You may withdraw from the study or refuse to answer any questions at any time without consequences.

You will be free to ask further questions at any time – before or after the interview. You may direct your questions about this study to me. But if you have any concerns about this study is being conducted, you may direct them to:

[Name of the Director],
Director of the [chosen agency]
Phone: XXX-XXXX

Paul Hagler,
Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research,
Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine
University of Alberta

Sincerely,

David Liu

Investigator's initial: _________ Study informant's initial: _________

Appendix E

Consent Form

Consent Form

Title: Supported Employment Program Outcomes: The Participants' Perspectives

Investigator: David Liu B.Sc., OT(C)

Master of Science student, Department of Occupational Therapy

Phone Number: 472-5201

	Yes	No
1. Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?		
2. Have you received and read a copy of the Consent Information Sheet?		
3. Do you understand the benefits and risks of taking part in this research study?		
4. Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?		
5. Do you understand that I might look at the information again in the future to answer other study questions?		
6. Do you understand that you are free to leave the study at any time? You do not have to give a reason and it will not affect the service you receive at [chosen agency].		
7. Do you understand that you may refuse to answer any question, without having to explain?		
8. Do you realize that I will audio record the whole interview?		
9. Do you understand who are allowed to look at the information you give out?		
10. Are you aware that what you tell me will be kept confidential except it is required by law?		

This study was explained to me by: ______________________ Date: ________________

I agree to take part in this study

Signature of Research Participant: ____

Printed Name: ____

Signature of Witness / Guardian (select one): ________________________________

Printed Name: ____

I believe that the person signing this form understands what is involved in the study and voluntarily agrees to participate.

Signature of Researcher: ____

Printed Name: ____

Appendix F

Demographic Data Form

Demographic Data Form

Study Title: Supported Employment Program Outcomes: The Participants' Perspectives

I D Number: ____________ Sex: _________ Date of birth: ____________________

Date commencing supported employment program: _________________________________

Medical History

Diagnosis (Axis I): _______________________

Date of first admission to psychiatric hospital: ________/____________/_______________

Day Month Year

Number of admission to hospital because of mental health issues: ________________

Education History

Special Education: Yes / No

Highest grade of secondary (high school) or elementary school attended: ☐☐

Number (1 t o 13) of grades of secondary of elementary school

Number of years of education at university:

☐ None

☐ Less than 1 year (of completed courses)

☐☐ Number of completed years

Number of year of schooling at an institution other than university, secondary or elementary school:

☐ None

☐ Less than 1 year (of completed courses)

☐☐ Number of completed years

Work History

Previous employment	**Part-time** (less that 30 hours a week) or **full-time** (30 hours or more a week)	Date started	Length of employment

Last occupation: _______________________

Length of last employment:__________________

Reason for leaving last employment:____________________

Community mental health follow-up information:

Contact person's name: ___________________________

Phone number: ___________________________

Appendix G

Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Study Title : Supported Employment Program Outcomes: The Participants' Perspectives

Date of interview: ______________________

Time of interview: ____________________

Place: ______________________

Interviewer: ______________________

Informant I.D.#: ______________________

Position of informant: ______________________

Investigator states:

"Thank you for your taking part in this research study. Before we start, I would like to explain to you what the interview is about and answer any of your questions about this research study and interview."

"I am going to interview 10 individuals, including you, who are in this supported employment program. The information collected from these interview is very important and is very useful in determining the usefulness of the program and what could be done better. The interview will last for about an hour."

"During the interview, I will ask you what you think about the supported employment program. I also want to know if taking part in this supported employment program has affected you and whether this was different from what you expected. Finally, we will talk about your background and if this has affected your experience in this program."

"Do you have any questions?"

Opening Key Statement:

- **Tell me about your experience of participating in this supported employment program.**

Interview Protocol (Cont'd)

(Questions 1 to 14 will be used as probes)

1. Tell me what had been good about the supported employment program?

2. Tell me what had not been so good about the supported employment program?

3. What have you got out of the program?

4. Has this changed as you progressed through the program?

5. Have you noticed any change to yourself or to your life since you started the supported employment program?

Interview Protocol (Cont'd)

6. What kind of changes?

7. What makes you stay in the supported employment program?

8. What was your expectation on this program?

9. Is your experience in this program different from what you expected?

10. Does your medical condition influence your experience in this program?

    If so, how?

Interview Protocol (Cont'd)

11. Does your educational background influence your experience in this program?

    If so, how?

12. Does your work history influence your experience in this program?

    If so, how?

13. Would you recommend others to participate in this supported employment program?

14. If you recommend this program to others, what would you tell them?

Interview Protocol (Cont'd)

15. Is there anything else you would like to add?

16. Any questions?

(Thanks individual for participating in this interview. Assure him or her of confidentiality of responses and potential future interviews)

Appendix H

Additional Questions for Interview Protocol

Additional Questions for Interview Protocol

1. What made you to come to the [chosen agency]?

2. Did you have any concerns before you come here?

3. Tell me about the types of program you have gone through at the [chosen agency]?

    ____

    ____

    ____

    ____

4. What do you think about the things that they offered to you so far? What does it mean to you?

5. You say (you are being accepted)________________, how does it affect you?
6. You say ______________________________________, how does it affect you?
7. You say ______________________________________, how does it affect you?
8. You say ______________________________________, how does it affect you?
9. You say ______________________________________, how does it affect you?

10. Is there any difference in terms of the way you deal with things and people?

11. If you had never come to this program, what would you be like?

12. By having a chance to … what does it mean to you?

13. How's thing progressed?

14. Has you experience changed over time?

15. Now you have a job, what does it mean to you?

Appendix I

Illustration of Transcending Data to Two Categories (Table 3-1)

Table 3-1

Illustration of Transcending Data to Two Categories

Data	Concept	Category (Open Code)	Category (Axial Code)
[Tell me what has been good about this program]. The knowledge, information that they give about how to find a job and stuff like that. [3-43]	Learning job search	Learning proper job search skills	Supported employment program outcome: *Job application skills* (under *increased knowledge and skills on employment*)
Well, I learned a few things about how to check the paper for jobs through them. [6-493]	Learning to check newspaper for job search		
and how I'm going about my job search and stuff like that. It did make me — I suppose it did do that. [7-207]	Learning job search skills		
The[case manager] asked me to attend group meetings. We had to learn to fill out an application form, what to watch out — not to make too many mistakes on your application form. [1-121]	Learning to fill job application form	Learning proper job application	
Well, they have seminars here, I think every day. Sometimes they have meetings in here, and this is where they bring out the various disabled people, and one day we're learning how to fill out properly an application form without making too many errors. They show you an application form with mistakes made and what you should look for. [1-367]	Learning to fill job application form		

Data	Concept	Category (Open Code)	Category (Axial Code)
Interview skills; I went through some mock interviews here, and that is helpful in its own way. I have the ability to consult with [my case manager]. [2-498]	Learning good job interview skills	Becoming more prepared for job interview	Supported employment program outcome: *Job application skills* (under *increased knowledge and skills on employment*)
The programs were quite helpful, especially the interview techniques program was pretty good. [7-5]	Learning good job interview skills		
Like, your interview techniques and stuff like that, [7-206]	Learning good job interview skills		
Also, they've had various workshops and programs that they conduct here in the office. I've attended several of these. One was interview skills. That was in two parts. The first part was here in the office, going through printed material that they had. The second part was a mock interview. So the person that was heading the group, she arranged a time and an appointment with everyone in the group so that they could come in for an interview sometime, just to see how their interview skills were, how they presented themselves, all that sort of thing. [2-47]	Learning good job interview skills Practicing job interview skills at mock interview		
The interview skills — I went to a mock interview for a fictional job. They made up a job, and they gave you the qualifications that were required, and a brief job description, etc., so you apply for that and you go in for the interview, and they rate you at how you do. So that is good. [2-343]	Practicing job interview skills at mock interview Feedback on mock interview performance given		

Data	Concept	Category (Open Code)	Category (Axial Code)
Even when I did the mock interview, I came here, dressed as I would for an actual interview. So that was quite good. They rate you on that, if you're overdressed, underdressed, whatever. [2-456]	Feedback on mock interview performance given	Becoming more prepared for job interview	Supported employment program outcome: *Job application skills* (under *increased knowledge and skills on employment*)
Well, [the interview skills training] builds your confidence, basically, is what it does. [Interviewer: Can you elaborate, please? Confident in what aspect?] It makes you feel like you can do an actual interview, type of thing. That's about it. [7-35]	Confidence in real job interview		
I thought it was very helpful, and good experience to find out so much information about it. It kind of helped me through it… More knowledge about the workforce. [4-34]	Increase knowledge on workforce	Increase knowledge on workforce	
Not really. However, you can develop some skills that will help you in the workplace. If I had been wanting to get a job as a receptionist or something like that, and needed something like PowerPoint, which they don't offer here, they would have paid for a 2-week course somewhere for me to learn how to work PowerPoint. [5-859]	Learning office skills	Acquiring more qualifications for job application	
Yes. Or if you wanted to become a forklift operator and the course was 2 weeks, you could get the training to become a forklift operator somewhere else for here. [5-867]	Learning machine operation skills		

Data	Concept	Category (Open Code)	Category (Axial Code)
What else did I attend? Oh, also a customer service workshop that they had here. It was called "Service Best," and that was quite good. That was quite good. That was attended actually — not attended, but presented by someone — there was a man who was not working for [the chosen agency], he was contracted out to conduct this seminar. That ran for one day, one full day, and that was quite good, actually. I obtained certification to be able to put in a resumé, so a kind of Service Best program. It was quite good. Tells you a lot about customer service. It was nice to be able to be a part of that and ask questions and stuff like that to a person that was right there in front of you. So even though he wasn't actually a member or an employee of [the chosen agency], it was still very good; it was very informative, very helpful. 'Cause I mean, different jobs that you do — I mean, I've worked as a bouncer — that is important; you know, public relations, customer services is very important. [2-67]	Learning customer service skills Certificate can be put in resume	Acquiring more qualifications for job application	Supported employment program outcome: *Job application skills* (under *increased knowledge and skills on employment*)
What did I get out of the program? Well, if you want to be concrete, I had the Alberta Best, the Customer Service — [2-492]	Learning customer service skills		
Customer Service Training, I got that; [2-497]	Learning customer service skills		

Data	Concept	Category (Open Code)	Category (Axial Code)
Oh, yeah, it's helpful. At least you're doing something, at least you're earning some money, you go out, there's some routine, there's some structure in my life there. So that is good, that is helpful that way. [2-905]	Earning income	Employment earnings	*Building a life* with extra employment earnings
Because you need — it helps to have extra money, it gives you confidence, it gets you a social life, like, interacting with people. [3-410]	Extra income is helpful		
The money on top of my AISH cheque is nice. My AISH cheque is reduced because of my employment earnings, but the extra money is nice. [5-92]	Extra income is nice		
It just — getting to know the employers, and talking with the employers, and having a paycheque coming to you every two weeks made me feel good. [4-416]	Feel good to have extra income		
If I have to go somewhere every day, I want to get paid, and I want the extra money, and I want to feel good that I can do something. I don't know how to explain it; just, I want a job, and I want to work. [3-443]	Wanted to have extra income		
The reason why I'm working is not really for the money. [5-91]	Money is not the main reason to work	Money is not the main reason to work	
The money is nice, but that's not the main reason why I'm working. [5-306]	Money is not the main reason to work		

Data	Concept	Category (Open Code)	Category (Axial Code)
Yes, it helps me to be able to do that. Also have enough money to buy clothes when I want to buy clothes — not the clothes that I need, but clothes that I want! [laughs] Be able to afford to go out for lunch a little bit more frequently, or out for supper. Because just on AISH, I wouldn't be able to afford to go out as much as I do! That type of thing. Don't need basically any help from my parents. I did need a little bit when I was just on AISH. I couldn't afford to go visit them as much as they wanted me to come and I wanted to go. Couldn't afford to do that. [5-296]	Extra income to spend on things, which are desirable but not basic necessities.	Enriching life (acquiring desirable things)	*Building a life*: A secondary supported employment outcome and a consequence of *obtaining employment*
It gave me extra spending money that I could buy art supplies. [4-184]	Extra income to spend on things, which are desirable but not basic necessities.		
It would just give me extra money to buy what I need for art supplies. It would help me out. [4-192]	Extra income to spend on things, which are desirable but not basic necessities.		
I would like a year or two years long-term job in the job force would help me to gain — just to have a job to have the money to buy my art materials. [4-323]	Extra income to spend on things, which are desirable but not basic necessities.		
You can go out and do things: go to dinner and go to movies and you can basically do what normal people do, I guess. You can survive and pay your bills, and have a bit of confidence in saying that you're self-supporting yourself and stuff like that, instead of living on assistance, which is very — I think it's very degrading. [7-550]	Do what normal people do	Enriching life (by doing what normal people do)	

Data	Concept	Category (Open Code)	Category (Axial Code)
Income? Well, I'm getting AISH and CCP, so I'm okay that way. I don't have to worry. I get $200 a month from where I work. I'm not allowed to make more than that, because then AISH will deduct from the AISH cheque. [6-259]	Not wanting too much earned income	Restriction of income assistance policy	Intervening condition of Central Category: *Disability income assistance policy - system level* (under *environmental intervening condition*)
Well, I have to admit, you know, I rely on my AISH quite a bit. I'm just afraid that if I make more than $200, then they'll start deducting off my AISH. I think full-time work, part-time, is okay. [6-715]	Wanting full amount of income assistance		

Appendix J

Eighteen Coding Families

Eighteen Coding Families

Coding In his book *Theoretical Sensitivity*, Glaser (1978, p.74-81) identifies some theoretical code that can be used in axial coding and selective coding to delineate relationships between emerging categories. Glaser further categorizes them into the following 18 coding families:

1. **The Six C's**: Causes, Contexts, Contingencies, Consequences, Covariances and Conditions.
2. **Process**: Stages, progressions, steps, and sequencings, etc.
3. **The Degree Family**: Limit, range, intensity, extent, amount, and level, etc.
4. **The Dimension Family**: Dimensions, part, aspect, and section, etc.
5. **Type Family:** Type, form, and kinds, etc.
6. **The Strategy Family:** Strategies, tactics, way, manipulation, dealing with, and techniques, etc.
7. **Interactive Family**: Mutual effects, reciprocity, mutual trajectory, mutual dependency, interdependence, and interaction of effects, etc.
8. **Identity-Self Family**: Self-image, self-concept, self-worth, self-evaluation, identity, social worth, self-realization, and transformations of self, etc.
9. **Cutting Point Family**: Boundary, critical juncture, cutting point, turning point, breaking point, and point of no return, etc.
10. **Means-goal Family**: End, purpose, goal, anticipated consequences, and products, etc.
11. **Cultural Family**: Social norms, social values, social beliefs, and social sentiments etc.
12. **Consensus Family**: Agreements, contracts, definitions of the situation, uniformities, differential perception, and homogeneity-heterogeneity, etc.
13. **The Mainline Family**: Social control, recruitment, socialization, stratification, social organization, social institutions, and social interaction, etc.
14. **Theoretical Family**: Integration, density, conceptual level, relationship to data, relationship to other theory, clarity, fit, relevance, interpretive, and explanatory power, etc.
15. **Ordering or Elaboration Family**: Structural, temporal and generality.

16. **Unit Family**: Collective, group, organization, context, status, and role relationship etc.

17. **Reading Family**: Concepts, problems and hypotheses.

18. **Models**: Linear model, etc.